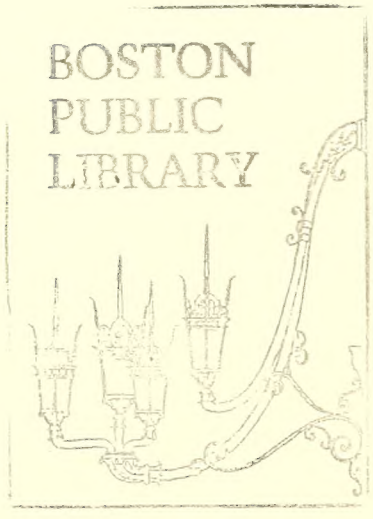
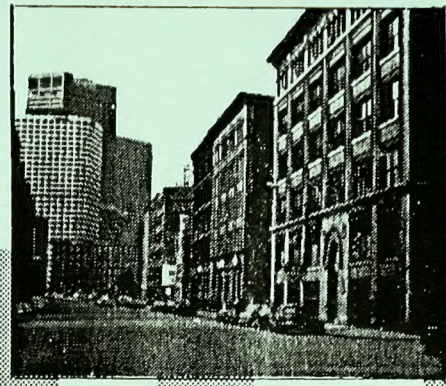
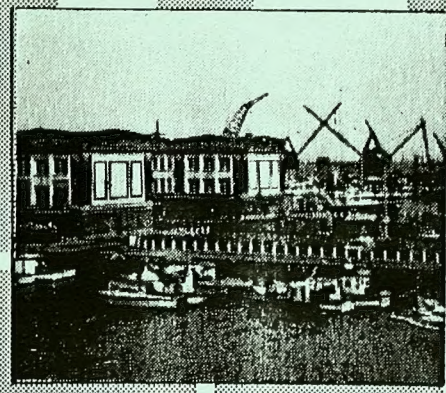

BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

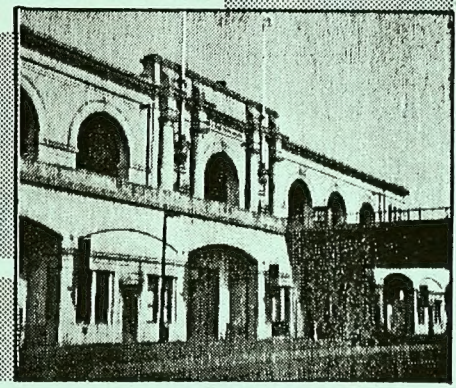
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
Government Documents
BRP 114

Fort Point
District Plan

New Congress Street/Piers Urban Design Guidelines: Building a New District







Property of the BRA Library

DRAFT
For
Discussion Purposes Only

City of Boston
Raymond L. Flynn, Mayor

Boston Redevelopment Authority
Stephen Coyle, Director

Fort Point Citizens Advisory Committee
Larry Dwyer, Chair

Boston Transportation Department
Richard Dimino, Commissioner

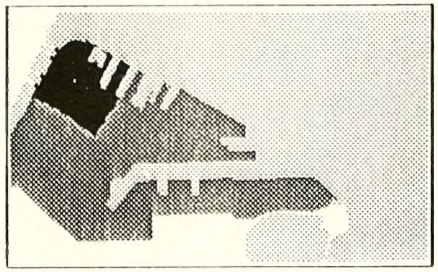
David Dixon & Associates

Property of the BRA Library

Fort Point
District Plan

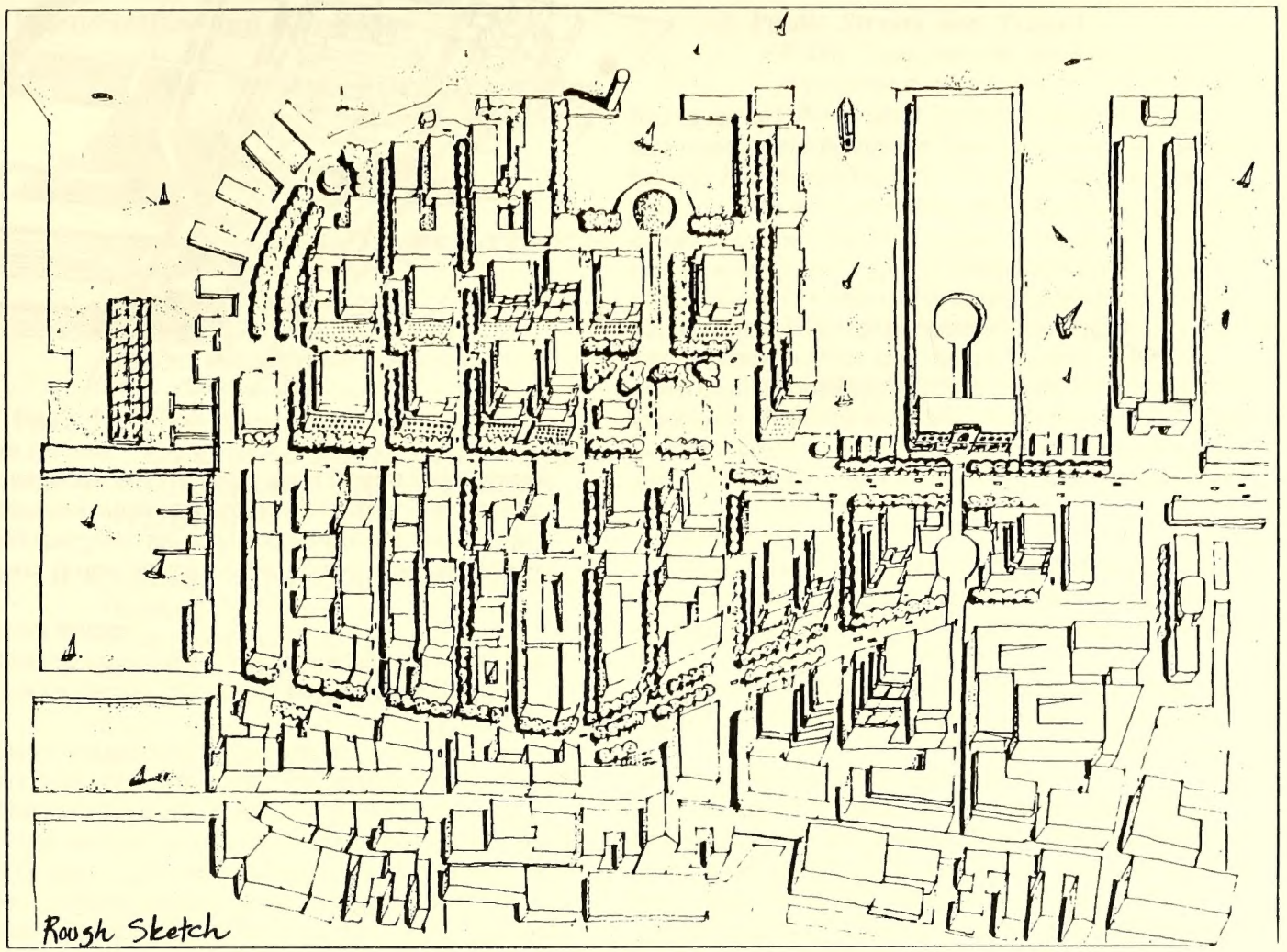
New Congress Street/Piers Urban Design Guidelines: Building a New District

Draft for BRA review
June 2, 1989



Above: light tone shows Fort Point District, dark tone shows New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone (guidelines area).
Right: aerial photo shows New Congress Street/Piers, fishing industry, EDIC's Marine Industrial Park, and portions of central manufacturing area and residential South Boston.

New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone

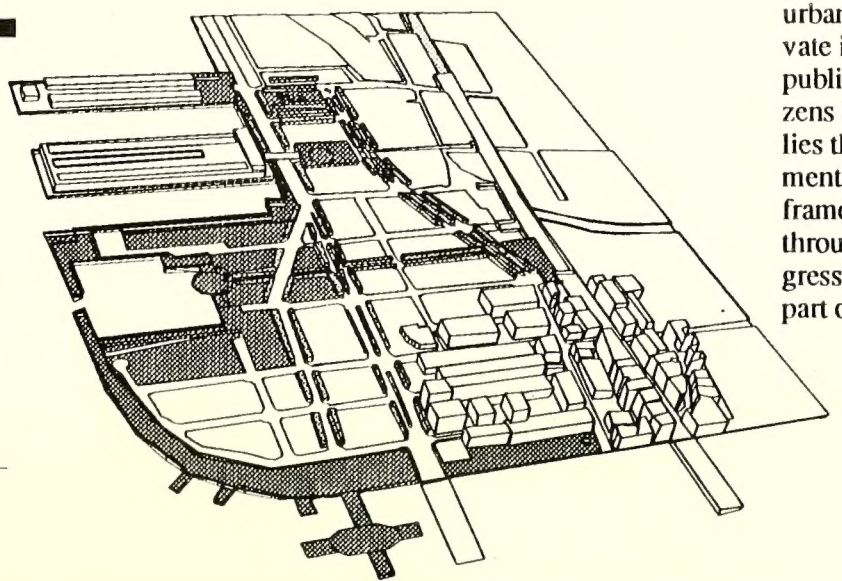


Introduction and Summary

These guidelines accompany the **Fort Point District Plan Progress Report** published by the BRA in March 1989. The first two parts identify the public policy goals which have been defined through three years of community planning by the City, South Boston residents, Fort Point businesspeople, harbor and cultural advocates, and labor and government representatives.

- **Part I** describes the broad public policy goals for creating a diversified economy within the entire Fort Point district.

- **Part II** describes the New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone, the early focus of public and private investment within the Fort Point District -- its current conditions, and the new Urban Design goals defined for the area.



New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone: historic fabric and new open space system

The last two parts present the urban design guidelines for public and private projects within the New Congress Street/Piers area. **These guidelines must be seen in the context of the public policy goals which precede them -- they are the tools with which the City can achieve these goals.**

- **Part III** describes the six basic Urban Design Principles, and their application on a district-wide basis.

- **Part IV** gives the specific Urban Design Guidelines for each part of the New Congress Street/Piers district -- its boulevards, its waterfronts, its historic fabric, and its principal public spaces.

The creation of a vital new urban district in the New Congress Street/Piers area will be an ongoing process. These guidelines are meant as a framework, showing how basic urban design principles will guide future public and private investment in the area. Many architects, planners, public officials, private businessmen, and interested citizens have already contributed to the thinking that underlies these guidelines. The City encourages future comments, criticisms, and suggestions, to refine the overall framework, or to elaborate individual elements. Only through this kind of public process can the New Congress Street/Piers District become a truly rich and diverse part of the city.

Contents

Introduction and Summary

Part I. Fort Point District: Providing a Flexible Economic Platform

- Future of the Fort Point District
- Forces for Change
- Community Planning Process: Fort PointCAC
- Seven Planning Goals
- Three Development Zones
- Boston's New Enterprise Zone
- A True Public/Private Partnership

Part II. New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone: Urban Design Goals for Building a New District

1. **Challenge: Overcoming Fragmentation**
   - Existing Conditions
   - Major New Public and Private Projects
2. **Waterfront Plans in Other Cities**
3. **Boston's Vision: New Urban Boulevards, Knitting Together a Series of Unique Quarters**
   - Districts and Quarters
   - The Emerald Necklace of Boulevards and Parks
   - Lively Streetscapes
   - Design Guidelines: Basic Principles

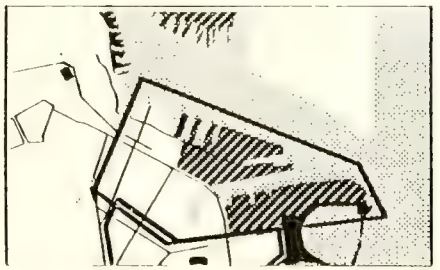
Part III. Design Guidelines: Basic Principles to Integrate Public and Private Investment

1. **Public Space System:** establishing a public focus for the district
2. **Public Streets and Transit**
   - Public Street Network: establishing an appropriate district scale
   - Public Transit System: linking the district to the wider region
3. **Managed Growth for Public Benefit**
   - Land Use and Density: establishing a sound foundation
   - Buffers: enhancing existing uses
4. **Street-level Activities**
   - Shops and Entrances: ensuring an active public zone
   - Parking and Service: defining an internal zone
5. **Massing, Scale, and Height:** building a livable district
6. **Architectural Character:** creating a district-wide vocabulary

Part IV. Applying the Guidelines

1. **New Congress Street: Urban Boulevard**
   - Summer Street Steps
   - World Trade Center Plaza
   - Fish Pier Plaza
2. **Existing Northern Avenue: Waterfront Boulevard**
3. **Summer Street: Urban Boulevard**
4. **New Northern Avenue: Urban Boulevard**
   - Lobster Park
   - Mariners' Park
5. **Fan Pier/Pier 4: Public Waterfront**
   - Fan Pier/Pier 4 Waterplaza
6. **Boston Wharf: Historic Area**
   - Museum Wharf

Part I The Fort Point District: Providing a Flexible Economic Platform



The Fort Point District: 910 acres lying between downtown, the waterfront, and residential South Boston

• Future of the Fort Point District

The Fort Point District has the potential to provide growth opportunities for nearly every sector of the metropolitan Boston economy. New manufacturing and R&D will welcome the prospect of direct access to Logan and the regional highway network. A growing tourism and recreation-based economy will benefit from improved access to the waterfront, beautification of the Channel edges, and the addition of major new, public open spaces. Back office as well as Class A office projects will compete for the limited number of prime opportunities in the New Northern Avenue and New Congress Street corridors. Expanding retail and restaurants will complement the strong existing presence of arts, cultural, and museum uses in the area. Advances in medical, bio-tech, and high-tech research, in a location just minutes from downtown and Logan Airport, will give rise to new applications in manufacturing and new industrial production. The potential benefits for Boston and the Commonwealth in tax revenues, employment gains, and enriched quality-of-life can be dramatic.

• Forces for Change

Transportation: the key to the district's future will be more than one billion dollars of public investment in new transportation projects, including the Seaport Access Road and Third Harbor Tunnel, the South Boston Bypass Road and Haul Road, New Northern Avenue Bridge and New Northern Avenue, and new mass transit service. Together with the reconstruction of ten area bridges, the creation of a local street grid, and improved water transportation, these projects will create a transportation network unmatched in New England.

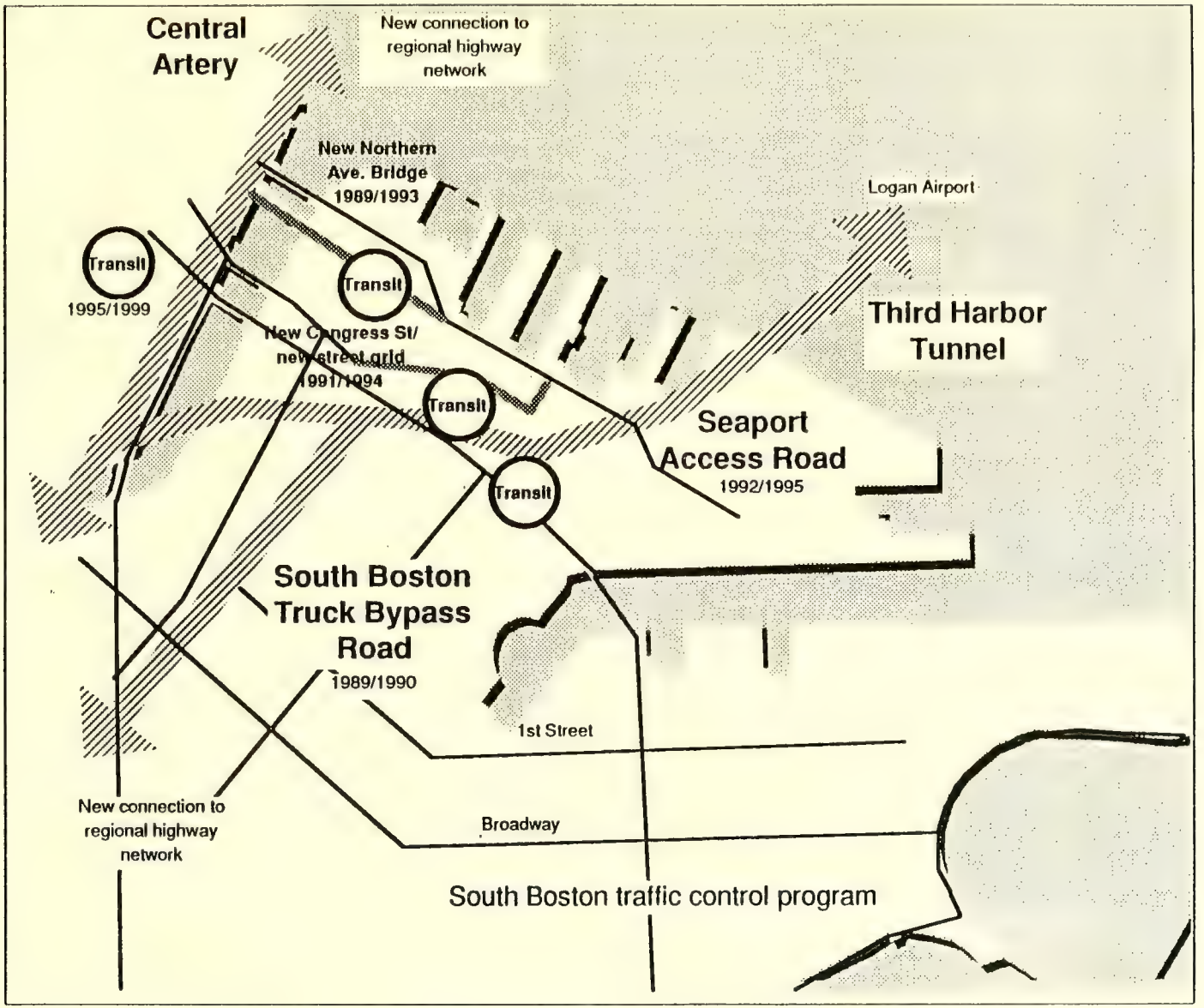
Private development: The recent proposals of the Fan Pier, Pier Four, and World Trade Center Phase II projects indicate the increasing private development interest in the District. The rehabilitation of commercial property has already created 120,000 square feet of housing and approximately 3 million square feet of back office space.

Massport and EDIC: recent port expansion sponsored by Massport includes the Conley Container Terminal, the Black Falcon Cruise Terminal, and the planned World Trade Center Phase II. Boston's EDIC operates the Boston Marine Industrial Park, a 95-acre industrial reservation that is home to 131 firms. With the support of the BRA, EDIC is also studying numerous ways of supporting and preserving existing industrial employment throughout South Boston.

Cultural Arts: the arrival of the Children's Museum, the creation of the new Computer Museum, and the establishment of the Fort Point Artists Community have added an expanding cultural dimension to the District.

Housing: the availability of open and underutilized land in the District provides a significant opportunity to meet the need for additional housing at both market and affordable prices.

Public transportation Improvements and construction dates



KEY

- new regional highway system
- Transit — new mass transit
- new surface streets and bridges

• Community Planning Process: The Fort Point CAC

In 1985, Mayor Flynn commissioned the Fort Point Citizens Advisory Committee (FPCAC), drawing into its ranks a broad spectrum of South Boston residents, Fort Point business representatives, harbor and cultural advocates, and labor and government representatives. Their charge was to provide advice and direction to the many agencies and interests pursuing a plan for the future of the 900 acre district.

The BRA initiated the current urban design study in late 1987. The planning and urban design team—directed by David Dixon & Associates, and including Skidmore Owings and Merrill, Todd Lee/Clark/Rozas, and Stull and Lee—has worked closely with the City and the FPCAC to establish public policy goals, and prepare options for community review.

In March, 1989, the BRA issued the **Fort Point District Plan: Progress Report**. These **Urban Design Guidelines** complement the **Progress Report**, spelling out in detail the desired character of the New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone, which will be the focus of much of the early public and private investment within the larger Fort Point District.

• Seven Planning Goals

The community planning process that has been underway for more than three years in the Fort Point District has established seven primary goals for successful development. Considered together, these goals reflect the steps that must be taken to enhance the economic strength, neighborhood character, and overall quality-of-life for the Fort Point District:

1. **Building a Diversified Economy;**
2. **Creating a New Transportation Network;**
3. **Creating New Housing Opportunities;**
4. **Providing Public Open Space and Water front Access;**
5. **Strengthening the Working Waterfront;**
6. **Protecting the Industrial and Manufacturing Base;**
7. **Managing Growth.**

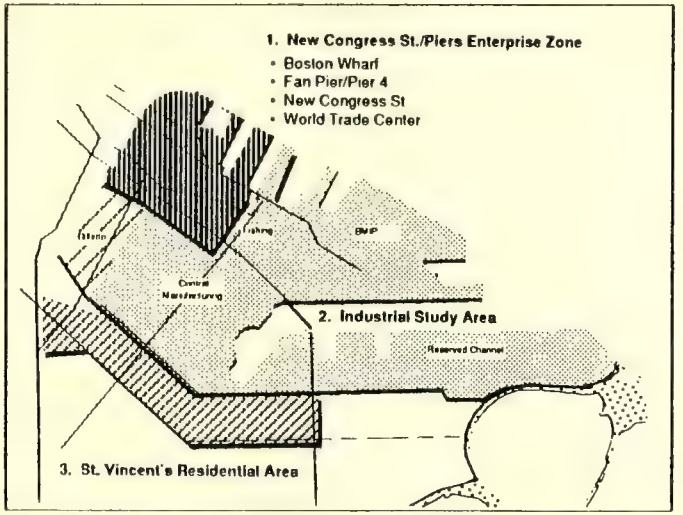
• Three Development Zones

The development strategy for the Fort Point District envisions a healthy, diversified economy which incorporates existing land uses and is connected to the various surrounding districts. The strategy reinforces existing land uses and patterns, and promotes three fundamental development zones:

1. New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone (175 acres):
the focus of early public and private investment, and the subject of these guidelines;

2. Industrial Study Area (600 acres):
the central manufacturing and industrial belt which extends from Gillette to the Fish Pier, the Boston Marine Industrial Park (BMIP), and the Reserved Channel; and

3. St. Vincent's Residential Area (135 acres):
a strengthened neighborhood within residential South Boston.


1. New Congress St./Piers Enterprise Zone
• Boston Wharf
• Fan Pier/Pier 4
• New Congress St
• World Trade Center
2. Industrial Study Area
3. St. Vincent's Residential Area

Three development zones

• Boston's New Enterprise Zone

The City of Boston and the Fort Point CAC propose designating the New Congress Street/Piers area as one of Boston's first "Enterprise Zones." Enterprise Zones are designated areas within cities that serve as incubators for new economies, while anchoring the existing economic base. They offer the opportunity to stimulate private development by building on public infrastructure improvements.

• A True Public/Private Partnership

These **Urban Design Guidelines** will guide the enormous public and private investments planned for the New Congress Street/Piers district, so it can achieve its potential as a lively new mixed-use urban district, offering substantial benefits to Fort Point, South Boston, and the entire City in terms of jobs, housing, open space, tax and linkage revenues. The Guidelines reflect the planning partnership that has existed between the City, the State, the business community, and the residents of South Boston for more than three years.

The Guidelines deal both with those infrastructure elements which will largely be designed and built by the public sector -- streets and highways, parks and plazas, mass transit, utilities, and public buildings -- and with those buildings and other elements which will be designed and built by the private sector. The public environment will provide the focus for the district, connecting private developments with one another and with the larger city. In turn, private developments will help to create the public environment, by defining its physical scale and character, and by providing the lively mix of uses necessary for the area's vitality and success.

The following two sections of these guidelines show how these public and private elements will work together. **Part III** shows how the six basic urban design principles will be applied on a district-wide basis. **Part IV** gives the specific guidelines for each part of the district.

Part II

New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone: Urban Design Goals for Building a New District

1. Challenge: Overcoming Fragmentation

New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone: 175 waterfront acres, directly across Fort Point Channel from downtown

• Existing Conditions

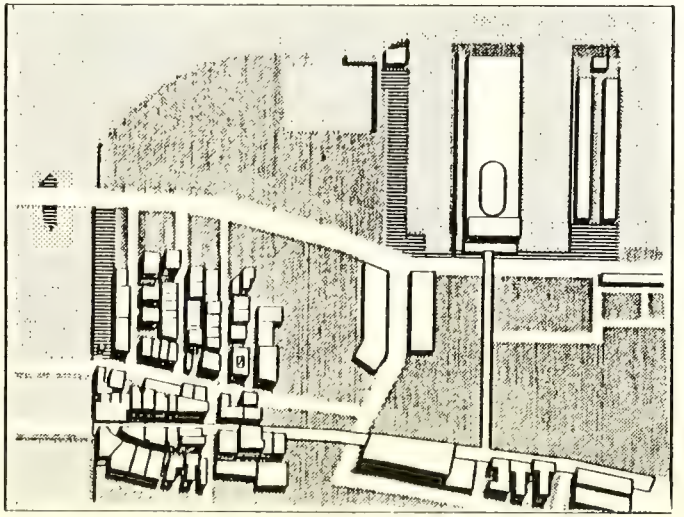
The physical character of the New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone today reflects its one hundred-year history of incremental land fills and building construction. The existing local street network is incomplete--Congress Street starts as a major downtown thoroughfare but dead-ends as a parking lot. The Boston Wharf area hosts historic brick warehouses, organized in a strong block pattern, while a random pattern of parking lots and low industrial buildings covers much of the interior. The waterfront supports an active freight and fishing industry, but public access and parks are negligible.

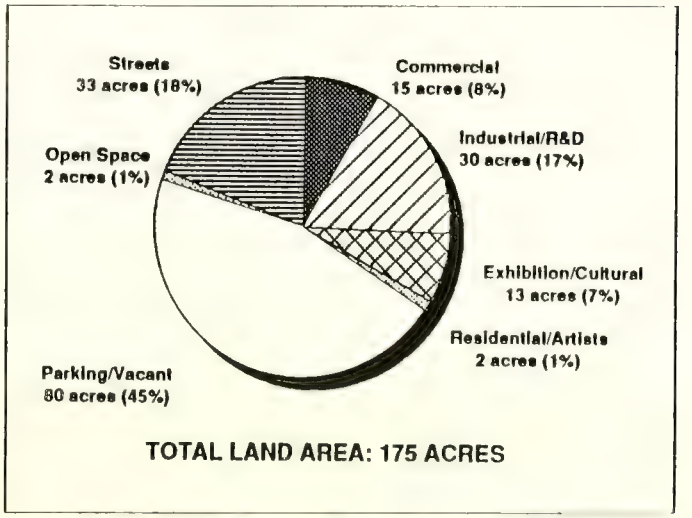
At the same time, the New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone enjoys several strong advantages, including:

- **its location on the waterfront**, directly across Fort Point Channel from downtown;
- **excellent future transportation links** for automobiles (the Seaport Access Road), trucks (the South Boston Bypass), and public transit (extension of mass transit service).
- **well-known existing public destinations**, including Museum Wharf and Commonwealth Pier; and
- **the attractive and well-preserved historic fabric** of the Boston Wharf buildings.

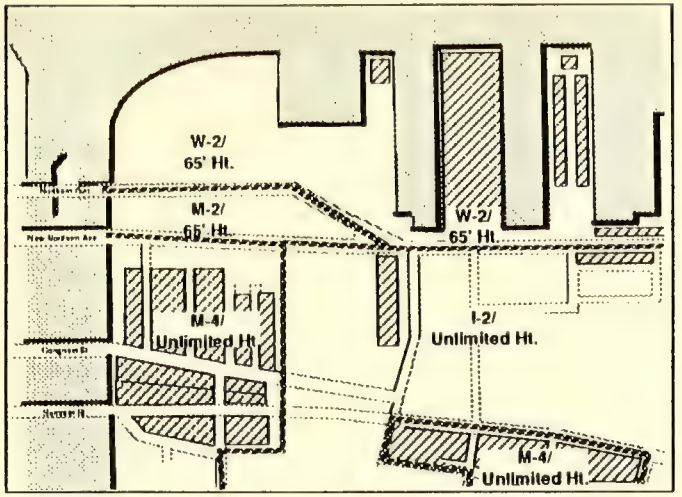
The Piers area contains a high percentage of developable land; 80 acres are currently vacant or used only for public/commuter parking. This land is concentrated in the hands of a few major landowners, simplifying the process of comprehensive planning. These circumstances suggest that the New Congress Street/Piers area could accommodate 66-75% of the total new development proposed for the entire Fort Point District, without displacement of existing industries.

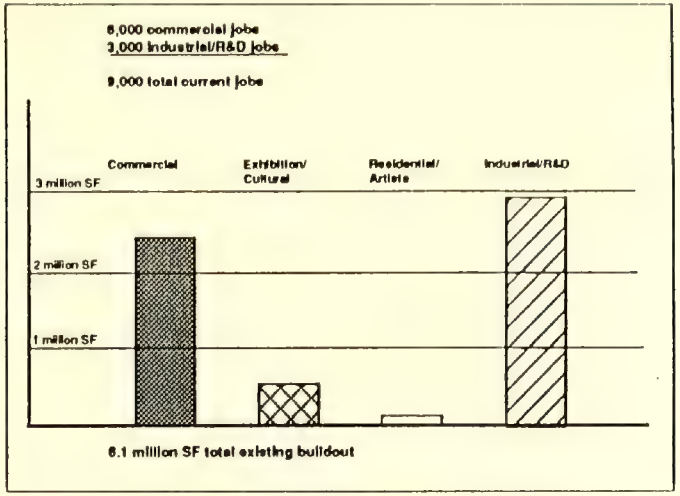
Left: existing street system
Right: existing land uses





Left: existing zoning
Right: existing build-out



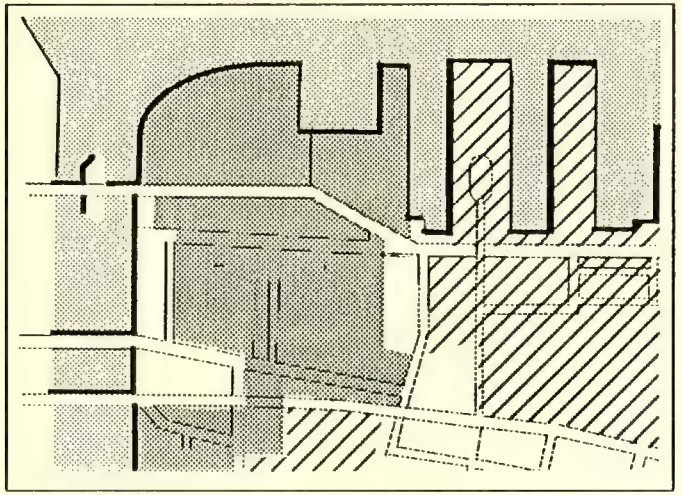


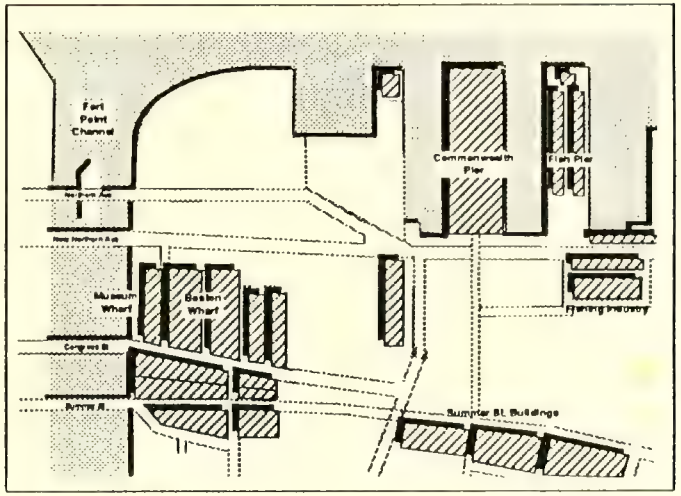
Left: Land ownership

Public

Major private

Right: Existing resources





• Major New Public and Private Projects

The City and FPCAC's first task has been to work with the State's DPW to resolve plans for elements of the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project (THT). In particular the turnpike-scaled Seaport Access Road (SAR) threatened to fragment the area and divide it from South Boston and the rest of the city. At the same time, several major private projects were proposed as self-contained enclaves.

To guide the major public and private investments planned for the New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone, the City and the FPCAC have worked together to define the Urban Design goals for the area. The goals aim at the creation of a lively new mixed-use urban district, one which builds on its existing advantages, including its historic buildings, its Harbor waterfront, and its proximity to downtown. The Urban Design Framework focuses on creating a strong public environment which will contain both public and private projects within a system of public boulevards, parks, and open spaces, making them partners in the formation of a coherent new district.

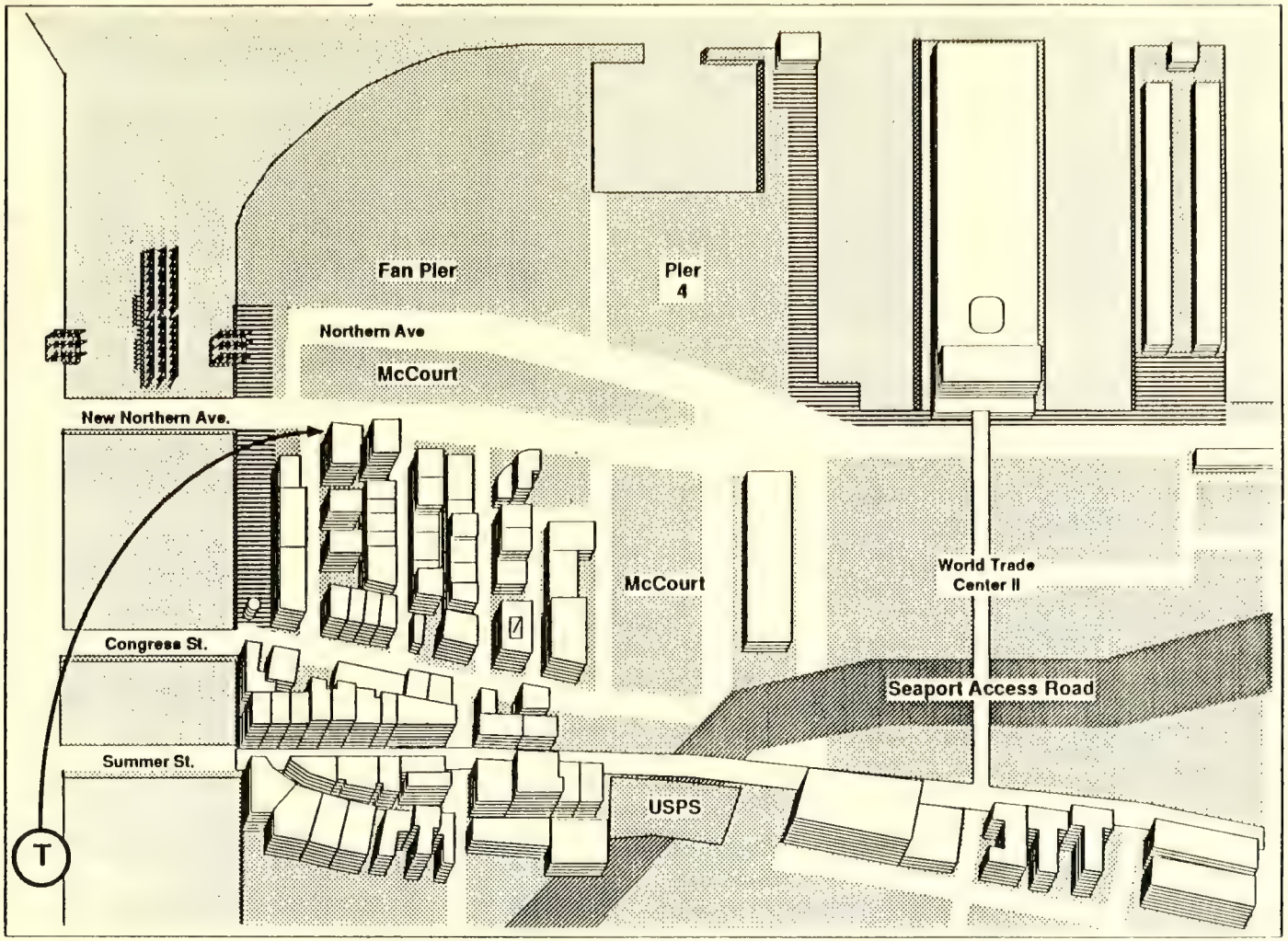
PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

	Cost ($ millions)	Status	Start	Complete
SAR & THT	1,000	App'vd.	1992	1995
Bypass	15	App'vd.	1989	1990
New Northern Ave. & Bridge	17.5	Com'td.	1989	1994
Bridge Repair	5	Com'td.	1989	1994
New City Streets	50	Design	1991	1994
Total	1,087.5			
Transit Phase I	150	Study	1995	1999
Transit Phase II	250	Study	-	-
Boston Edison Substation	-	Study	1990	1992

PROPOSED PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

	Land (acres)	Investment ($ millions)
Fan Pier	17	450
Pier 4	11	250
McCourt	15	350
World Trade Center	8	300
US Postal Service Site	17	100

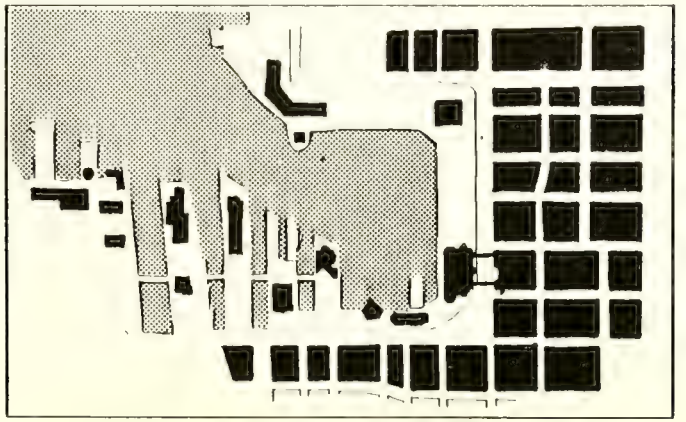
New Congress Street/Piers: major new public and proposed private projects



2. Waterfront Plans in Other Cities

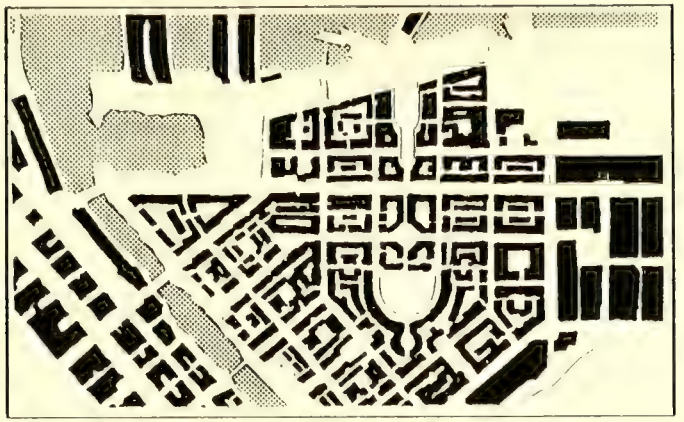
Cities around the world are turning to their waterfront areas for opportunities to reinvigorate their economies. In addition to expanding the capacities of maritime and port-related industries, cities are creating housing, commercial development, and recreational and open space uses along their waterfronts. Current examples of waterfront revitalization found in Baltimore, San Francisco, New York, and London offer important lessons for planning the New Congress Street/Piers waterfront.

The differences in waterfront plans among the four cities reflect the different vision each city has for the future of its waterfront. **Baltimore's Inner Harbor** shows how a publicly accessible waterfront can act as a major gathering place for the entire city. **San Francisco's Mission Bay** shows how a mixed-use economy can preseve and expand existing industrial, commercial, residential, and open space uses. **New York's Battery Park City** shows how stringent design guidelines and a generous public open space system can create a vital new urban district. And **London's Canary Wharf** shows how the lack of public planning can produce a dense enclave of private development, offering no public benefits.



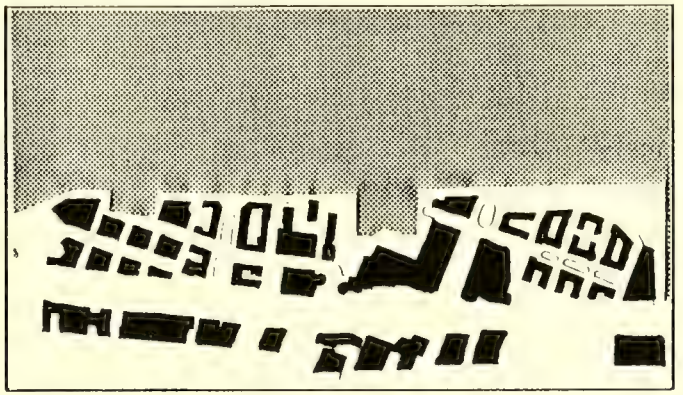
• Baltimore's Inner Harbor

A continuous band of public open space, including public parks, waterfront promenades, an athletic field, and renovated piers, surrounds the harbor. The critical mass of major public destinations includes a convention center, a hotel, a retail marketplace, an aquarium, and a museum, demonstrating that an active public waterfront can draw all elements of the community. *New Congress Street/Piers can build on the presence of two popular museums and the exhibition space of the World Trade Center to help enliven its waterfront public spaces.*



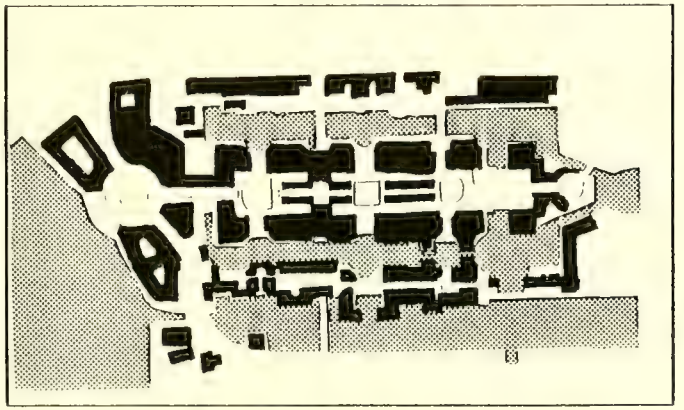
• San Francisco's Mission Bay

This low-rise residential development is buffered by a zone of commercial and industrial uses. A continuous waterfront park is linked to an open space system of small-scale local parks, but the plan lacks strong links to surrounding areas. Guidelines encourage local housing prototypes. *This example of a "new community," dedicated to providing a range of housing, offers one option for the New Congress Street/Piers area. The gross FAR of 1.0 is comparable to plans for the entire Fort Point District.*



• New York's Battery Park City

This high density district extends downtown through a combination of high-rise commercial buildings and mid-rise residential quarters. An open space network of boulevards, streets, and local parks is linked to a continuous waterfront promenade, with a winter garden and adjoining waterfront plaza as major public destinations. *Stringent design guidelines and a generous public open space system have helped create a vital new urban district. The gross FAR of 5.5 is more than twice the density of proposals for the New Congress Street/Piers area*



• London's Canary Wharf

This major commercial project duplicates the density and character of a downtown financial district directly on the waterfront. A self-contained island of high-density commercial development, the project shows no connection to its surroundings in terms of use, scale, or design. The open space is largely an interior spine, partly roofed over and "privatized." *Canary Wharf shows the consequences of placing commercial development ahead of the public environment; the lesson is to reinforce Boston's determination to preserve a publicly accessible waterfront.*

3. Boston's Vision: New Urban Boulevards, Knitting Together a Series of Unique Quarters

As well as learning from the waterfront plans of other cities, the Urban Design Framework for the New Congress Street/Piers District draws on Boston's own heritage of architecture and planning.

• Districts and Quarters

As Kevin Lynch and other planners observed over thirty years ago, Boston is made up of a series of districts, each with its own distinctive physical character and boundaries. In central Boston alone one can find Beacon Hill, Back Bay, the North End, the Financial Distict, Chinatown, Midtown, Bay Village, and the South End. Boston's planning policy in recent years has worked to reinforce the character of these districts, through zoning restrictions which govern use, density, and height, historic preservation regulations which retain the existing fabric, and design guidelines which ensure that new development is compatible with a district's existing character.

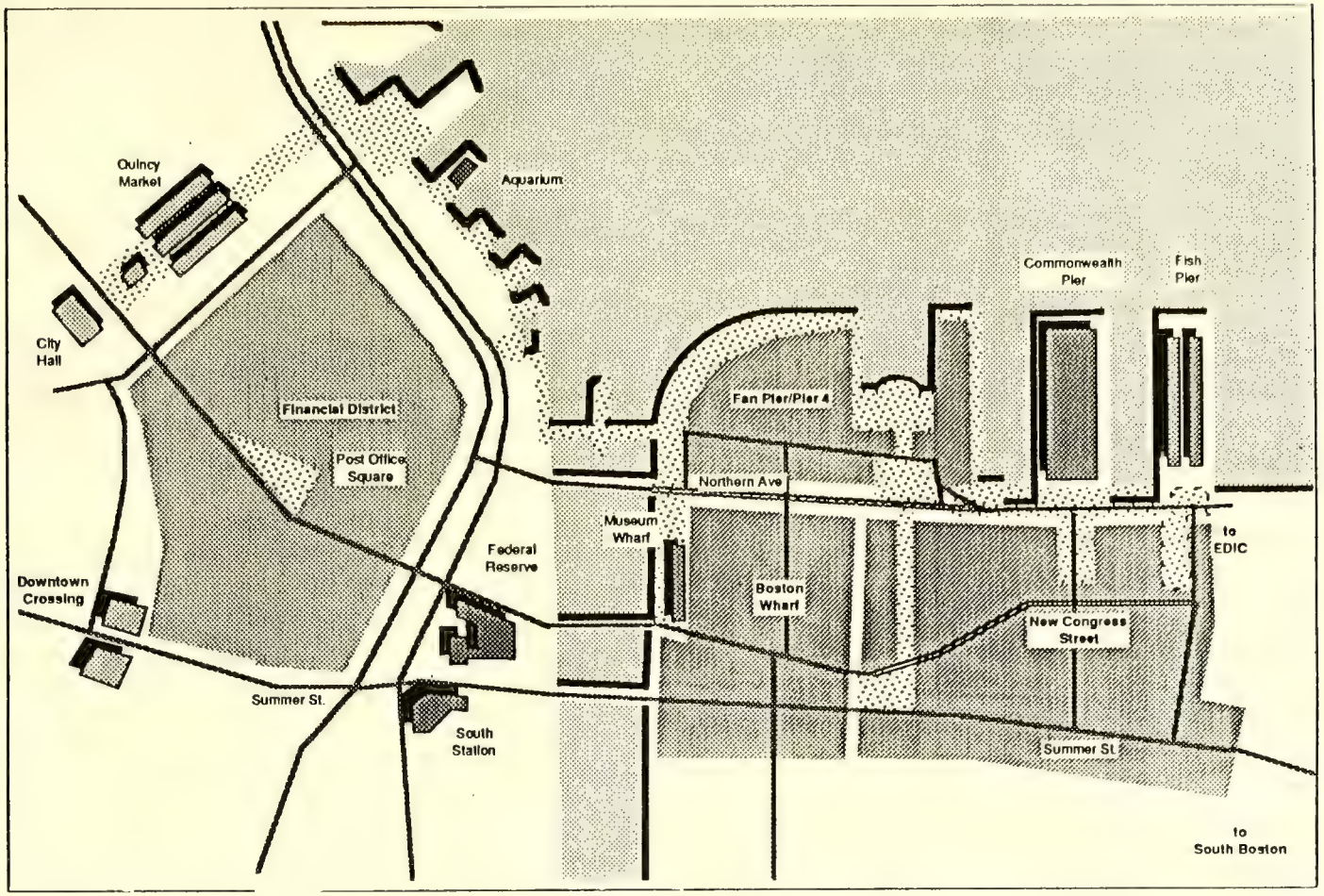
The New Congress Street/Piers area has the potential to add another identifiable district to Boston's urban pattern. And just as other districts derive much of their richness from subdivision into smaller, yet still identifiable "quarters," within the the New Congress Street/Piers District three distinct quarters can be found: **Boston Wharf**—a historic mixed-use area extending along Museum Wharf; **Fan Pier/Pier 4**—a new mixed-use waterfront area with denser commercial development along New Northern Avenue; and **New Congress Street**--a mixed-use "spine" of denser development, anchored by a series of key public open spaces.

• The Emerald Necklace of Boulevards and Parks

Equally important to Boston's urban pattern is its "Emerald Necklace" of landscaped boulevards and parks. First laid out in the late 19th century by Frederick Law Olmsted, this coherent open space system serves to tie together the disparate districts of the city. In recent years, Olmsted's vision has helped inspire the regional Harborwalk system, which provides continous public access to and enjoyment of the waterfront, all the way from the Charlestown Navy Yard and the Charles River Esplanade to the Fort Point Channel.

A new public open space system, made up of boulevards and parks, is central to the Urban Design Framework for the New Congress Street/Piers District. Two tree-lined major boulevards, New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue, will serve as the focus of the district, concentrating both the density of new development, and patterns of street-level pedestrian activity. The regional Harborwalk system will be extended from Fort Point Channel to the Fish Pier, with a generous public park along the Fan Pier and Pier 4 waterfront, and with the enhancement of existing Northern Avenue's character as a lively maritime boulevard.

Urban Design Framework: new urban boulevards in New Congress Street/Piers will link the district to the rest of the city



• Lively Urban Streets and Squares

The third lesson of planning in Boston is that a city's open space system encompasses its streets and squares, as well as its parks. Within the urban fabric, the success or failure of streets and squares as public open spaces depends more on their character and their activities than it does on their size. Large open plazas, like City Hall Plaza and the old Copley Square, have proved to be empty, wind-swept failures. And by tearing large holes in the urban fabric, such spaces actually make the city less coherent and less attractive.

In contrast, in the last twenty years planners have come to realize that the city street should be the focus of urban design. The street is where pedestrians and cars, shops and restaurants, building entrances and transit stations, all come together in an energetic mix. Streets like Washington, Charles, Boylston, and Newbury Streets offer residents and visitors some of Boston's liveliest and most characteristic experiences. Along these streets, strategic open spaces, ranging in size from the widened sidewalks of Boylston Street, to the pedestrian mall at Downtown Crossing, to the one-and-one-half acres of Post Office Square, serve to focus and heighten this sense of activity and excitement.

The guidelines seek to foster this kind of mix in the streets and squares of the New Congress Street/Piers District. Massing, scale, and height guidelines will require private development to focus on public streets and open spaces, with strong streetwalls and major building entrances. Continuous active street-level zones of retail, restaurants, and building entrances will enhance streets throughout the district. Principal open spaces will be located at strategic points, serving as a focus for the activities and the physical character of the adjoining quarter and of the entire district.

• Design Guidelines: Basic Principles

The Urban Design Guidelines which have emerged from the three-year-long public planning process for the New Congress Street/Piers Enterprise Zone draw on all of these ideas which shape current thinking about planning and design in Boston, as well as drawing on the experiences of other cities around the world. In order to make the Enterprise Zone a vital new mixed-use district, the City and the Fort Point CAC have defined the following six basic principles for urban design:

1. **public open space system** which serves as the focus for the new district;

2. **new transportation infrastructure,** consisting of a new public street network which establishes an appropriate scale for the area; and a mass transit system which reinforces the desired character of the public environment;

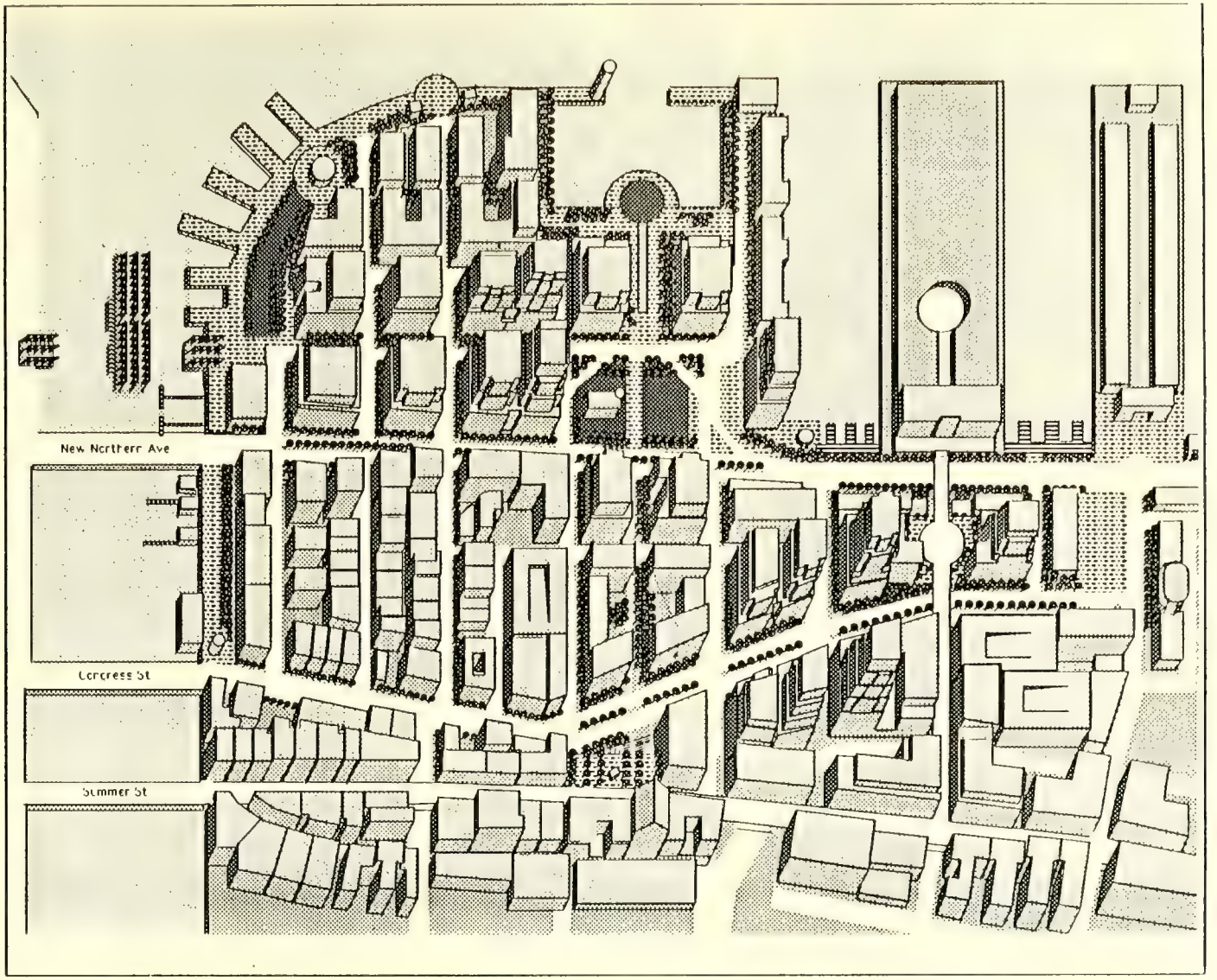
3. **land use and density patterns** which integrate a mixed economy with a working waterfront, maximize opportunities for the creation of new housing, and form appropriate transitions and buffers to adjacent areas;

4. **street-level activity patterns** which enliven and reinforce the public environment;

5. **massing, height, and scale guidelines** for new buildings which help create the desired character of the public environment;

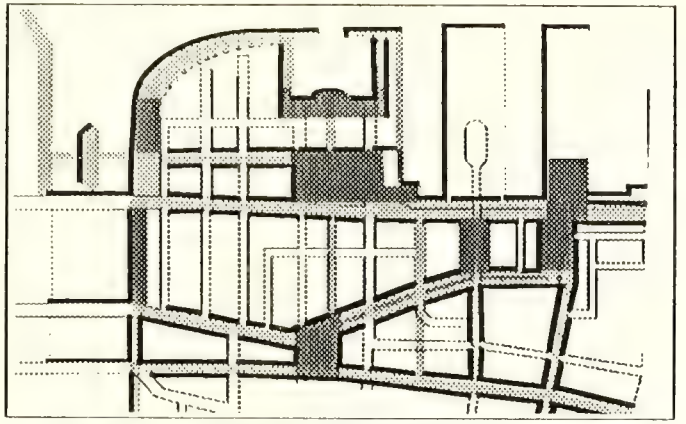
6. **architectural vocabulary** for new buildings which enhances the existing and potential character of the district.

Axonometric view of proposed district, with its boulevards, parks, and quarters



Part III Design Guidelines

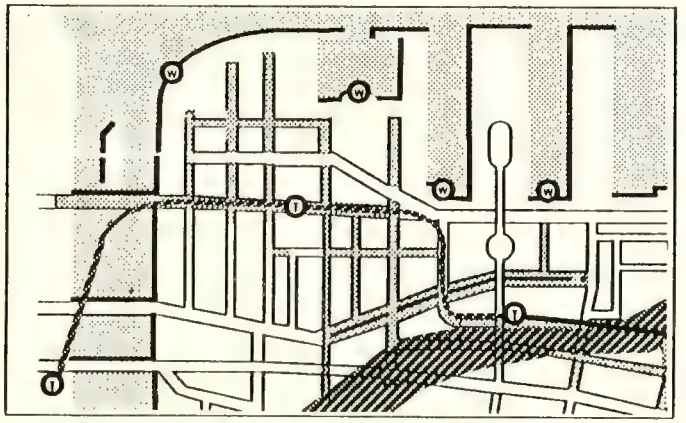
1



Public Open Space System

A coherent system of boulevards, parks, pedestrian ways, and principal open spaces will serve as the focus for the district. The open space system will bind together the different quarters of the district, and connect them to the wider city.

2

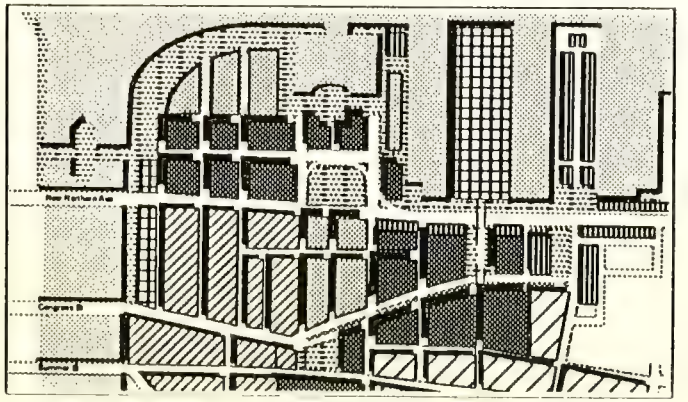


Public Streets and Transit

A new public street network will establish an appropriate "city" scale for the district. The street network will connect the district to the regional highway system, while isolating local residential streets from commuter and truck traffic.

The MBTA's new transitway will provide a direct link to downtown. The below-grade alignment will avoid negative impacts on the surface environment, while highly visible stations will reinforce street-level activity patterns.

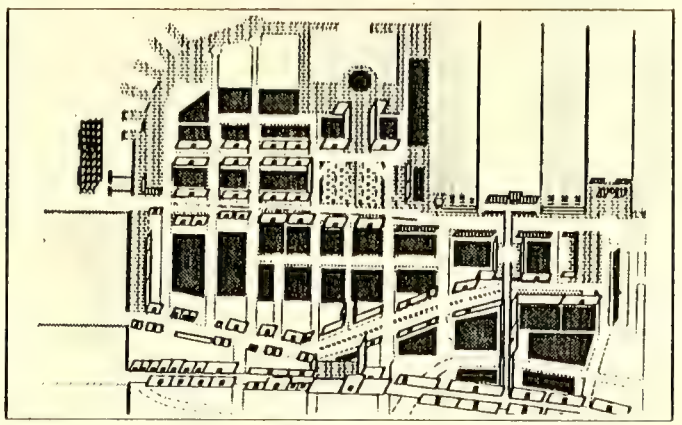
3



Land Use and Density

Land use and density controls will manage growth, while providing for important public benefits. New development will be concentrated in the New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue corridors. Buffers in use and scale will provide appropriate transitions to adjacent areas -- the historic fabric of the Boston Wharf area; the fishing industry east of D Street; the central manufacturing area south of Summer Street; and the public waterfront created by the extension of the Harborwalk.

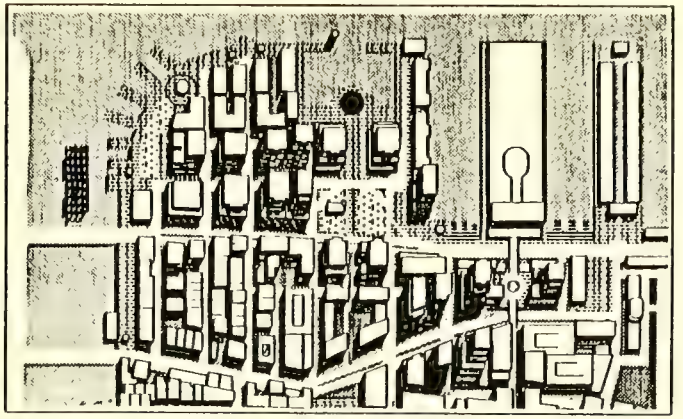
4



Street-level Activities

A continuous zone of street-level retail and major building entrances will enliven the public environment. An internal service zone will be the location for loading docks, parking garage entrances and exits, and other service uses.

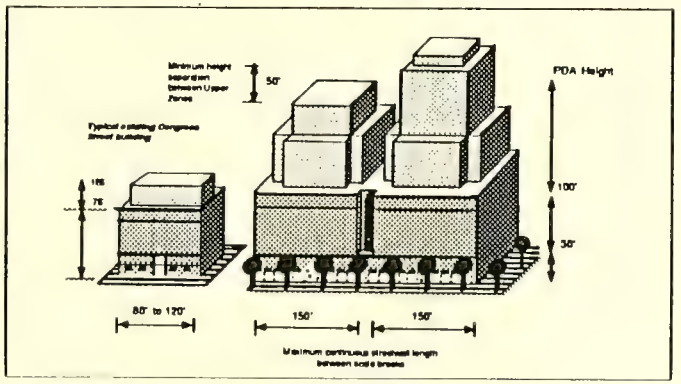
5



Massing, Scale, and Height

Guidelines for new development will help establish the desired character of the public environment. Continuous streetwalls will help define boulevards and major public spaces, at a scale consistent with the Boston Wharf area. Massing and height guidelines will provide for sun, light, and views on public streets and open spaces.

6



Architectural Character

Guidelines for new buildings will ensure that new development is consistent with the desired character of each boulevard, street, and open space in the district. Boulevard buildings will be compatible with the BostonWharf area in form, scale, and materials. Pedestrian-scaled waterfront buildings will enjoy a greater freedom of form and materials.

1 Public Open Space System: Establishing a Public Focus for the District

The focus of the public environment will be the district's public open space system. The open space system will be made up of a series of elements: major boulevards, waterfront parks, pedestrian ways, and principal open spaces (parks and squares).

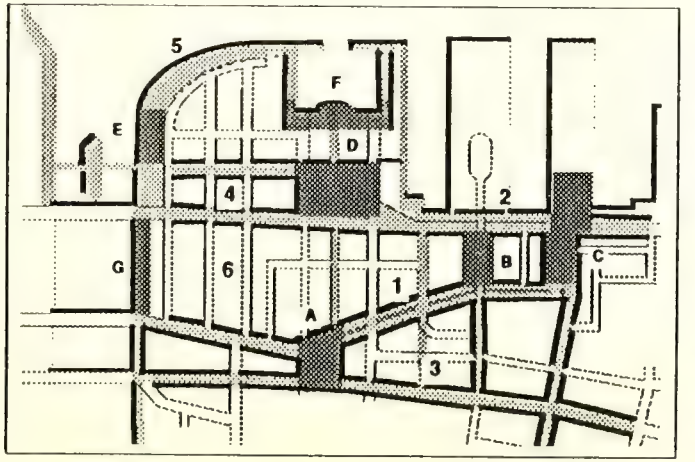
• **Boulevards:** to bind the quarters of the district together, and to connect them to the larger city, New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue will be extended as tree-lined boulevards. These two boulevards will serve as the focus of new development, and link the district to downtown. Existing Northern Avenue will serve as a waterfront boulevard, retaining its existing mix of uses. Summer Street will serve as a buffer between the district and the industrial area to the south.

• **Waterfront parks:** to provide continuous public access to the waterfront, the regional Harborwalk system will be extended from Fort Point Channel to the Fish Pier, to connect the South Boston waterfront into a system which extends to downtown and then as faar as the Charelestown Navy Yard.

• **Pedestrian ways:** to link the waterfront to residential South Boston, a series of north-south streets and pedestrian ways will be created or enhanced, providing view corridors toward the water, as well as pedestrian access.

• **Principal Open Spaces:** to focus the activities and character of the different quarters which make up the district, a series of major public spaces will be located at key points along the boulevards and waterfront. New Congress Street will begin at the Summer Street Steps, continue to World Trade Center Square, and end at Fish Pier Square, the symbolic front door for the fishing industry. The waterfront park will begin at Lobster Park (the northerly extension of Museum Wharf), continue to the Pier 4 Waterplaza, and end at the Fish Pier. New Northern Avenue will begin at Lobster Park and end at Mariners' Park. The Boston Wharf area will continue to be focused on Museum Wharf.

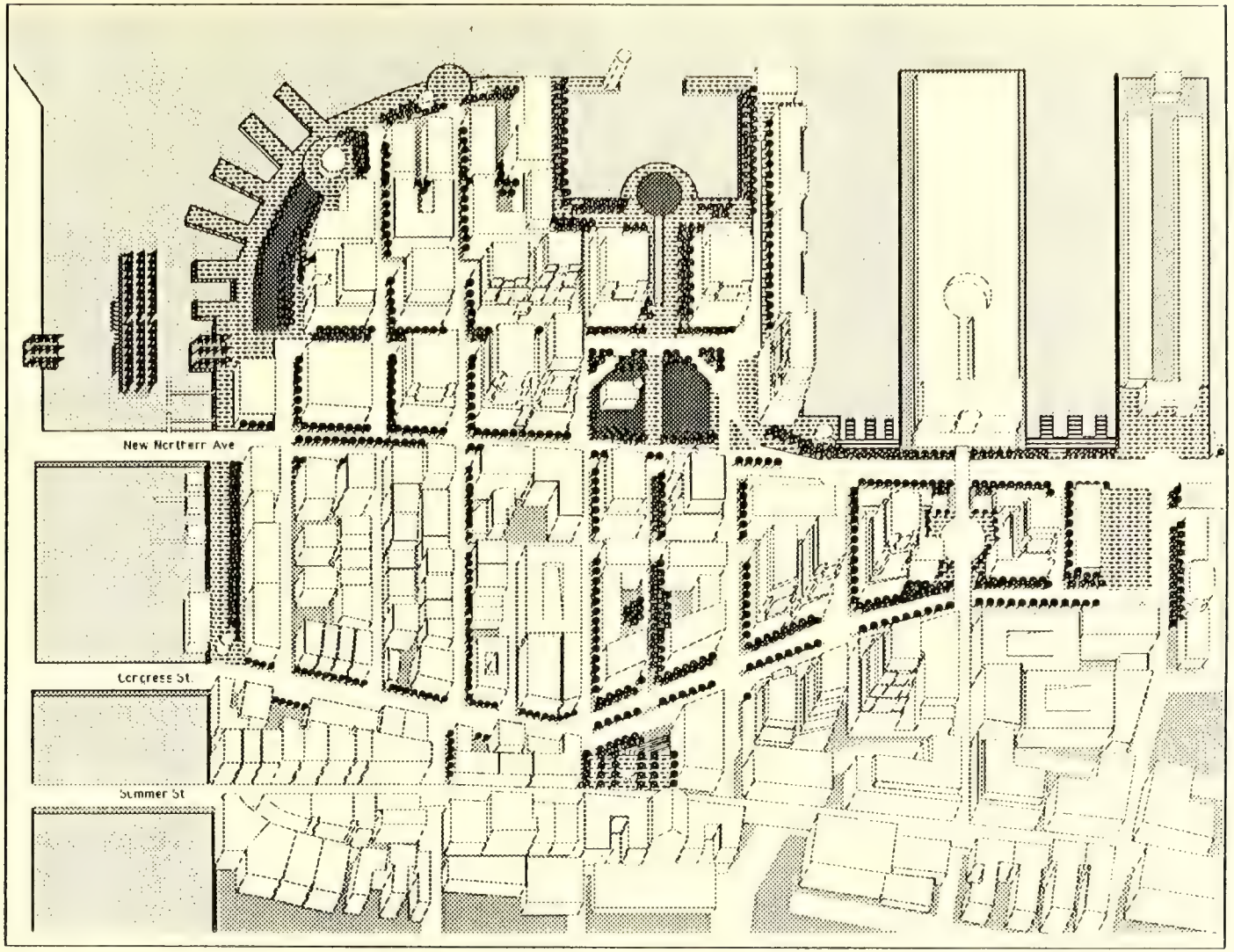
1. New Congress Street: Boulevard
   A. Summer Street Steps
   B. World Trade Center Square
   C. Fish Pier Square
2. Existing Northern Ave: Boulevard
3. Summer Street: Boulevard
4. New Northern Avenue: Boulevard
   D. Mariners' Park
5. Fan Pier/Pier 4: Waterfront
   E. Lobster Park
   F. Pier 4 Waterplaza
6. Boston Wharf: Historic Area
   G. Museum Wharf



• Provisions for Public Art

The Boston Wharf area within the New Congress Street/ Piers houses one of the largest concentrations of artists on the East Coast, offering a valuable resource for the creation of the public environment. Major public artworks such as fountains or sculptures should be designed as an integral part of all public open spaces.

Illustrative concept plan of open space system



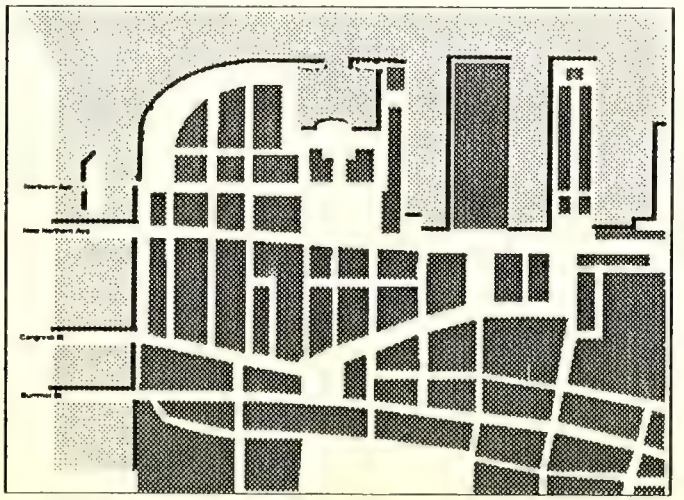
2 Public Streets and Transit

• Public Street Network: Establishing an Appropriate District Scale

The public open space system must be seen in conjunction with the network of local public streets. The Boston Transportation Department , working with the BRA and the Fort Point CAC, has designed a new street network for the district which will define an appropriate urban scale, connect to existing streets, and avoid the creation of superblocks. The street network will also isolate commuter and truck traffic from local residential streets and provide direct access to the Seaport Access Road and Bypass.

The regional highway system which will be constructed as part of the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel project will also have an impact on the Urban Design Framework for the area. Local elements include the Seaport Access Road, the South Boston Truck Bypass, and the Massport Haul Road, through the final alignment of entrance and exit ramps, the design of bridges, embankments, and vent structures, and the provisions for future air-rights development over the highway.

Another element of the street network will be the preservation and restoration of the "museum" of existing historic bridges across the Fort Point Channel, including the Northern Avenue, Congress and Summer Street, and Old Colony Railroad Bridges.



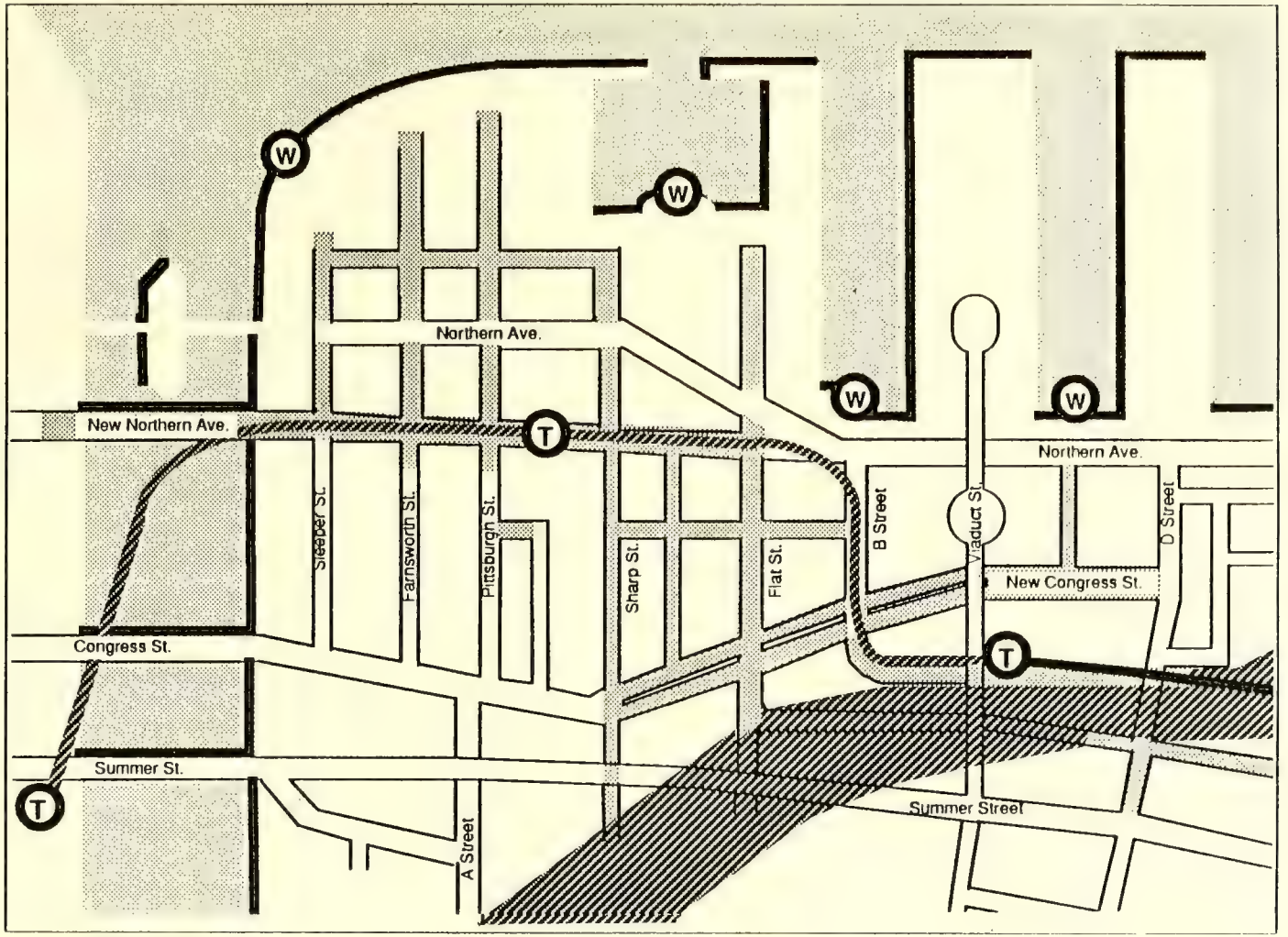
Block pattern defines an appropriate urban scale

• Public Transit System: Linking the District to the Wider Region

A new public mass transit system will be another key element for the area. The MBTA's current transitway proposal for the district will provide direct access to downtown Boston, relieving congestion on local streets and regional highways. It will be critical to locate the new transitway below-grade, to avoid negative impacts on traffic and on public streetscapes along New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue. New stations, however, will be highly visible elements, and will be located as focal points in or adjacent to major public spaces.

Ferry services and pleasure cruises in Boston Harbor have increased dramatically in recent years, and will continue to grow. Provision will also be made along the waterfront for new water transportation facilities at the Fan Pier, Pier 4, and Commonwealth Pier.

Transportation Infrastructure



KEY

- Existing street
- New local street
- New regional highway
- T — Transit route & stations (below-grade /surface)
- W — Water transportation

3 Managed Growth for Public Benefit

• Land Use and Density: Establishing a Sound Foundation

Land use and density controls will manage growth in the New Congress Street/Piers District, by channeling new development into vacant or under-utilized land in the New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue corridors. Commercial uses will be concentrated along these corridors, with housing oriented toward the waterfront and other public open spaces, and R&D/industrial uses along Summer and D Streets.

The greatest density will be possible within Planned Development Areas (PDAs), which will generate substantial public benefits for the Fort Point District, South Boston, and the City. The public benefits produced by PDAs will include the creation of new affordable housing, support for dependent economies, investment in industrial and bio-medical research and development, new permanent and construction jobs, new public open space, and tax and linkage revenues.

• Buffers: Enhancing Existing Uses

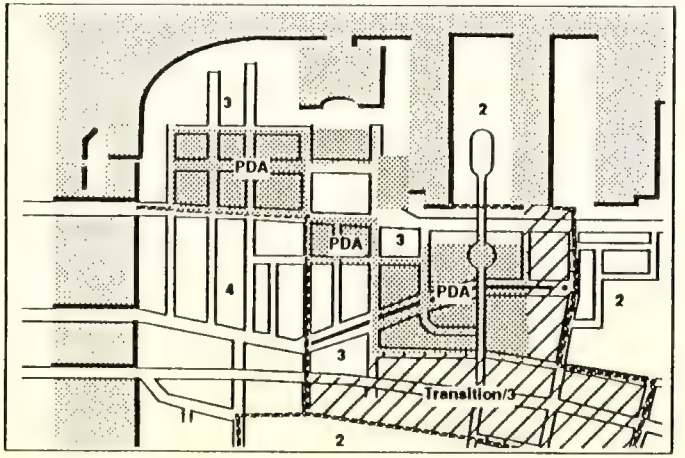
A series of transition zones will provide appropriate buffers between the New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue corridors and more sensitive areas. New infill construction along the edges of the BostonWharf area will be sensitive to its existing historic fabric. Moderate-scaled R&D and industrial uses along Summer and D Streets will buffer the adjacent fishing industry and other industries. Low-scaled development along the waterrfront will provide a pedestrian scale for the extension of the Harborwalk, and ensure that the Northern Avenue waterfront remains the focus of water-related public activities and a working waterfront.

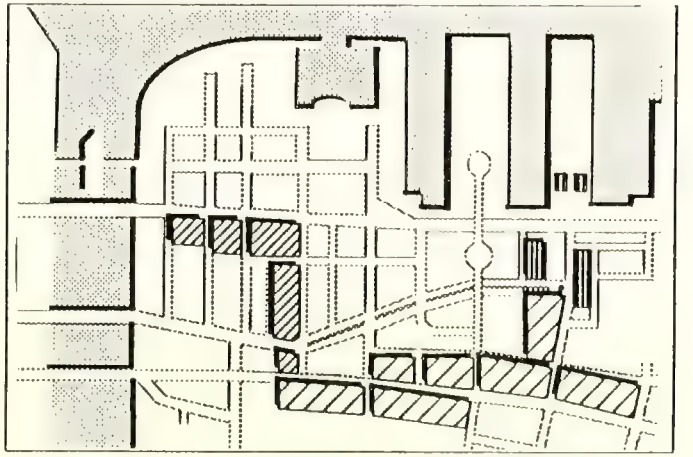
Left: proposed FAR
Right: buildings to buffer existing uses

water-related

Industrial/R&D

Boston Wharf

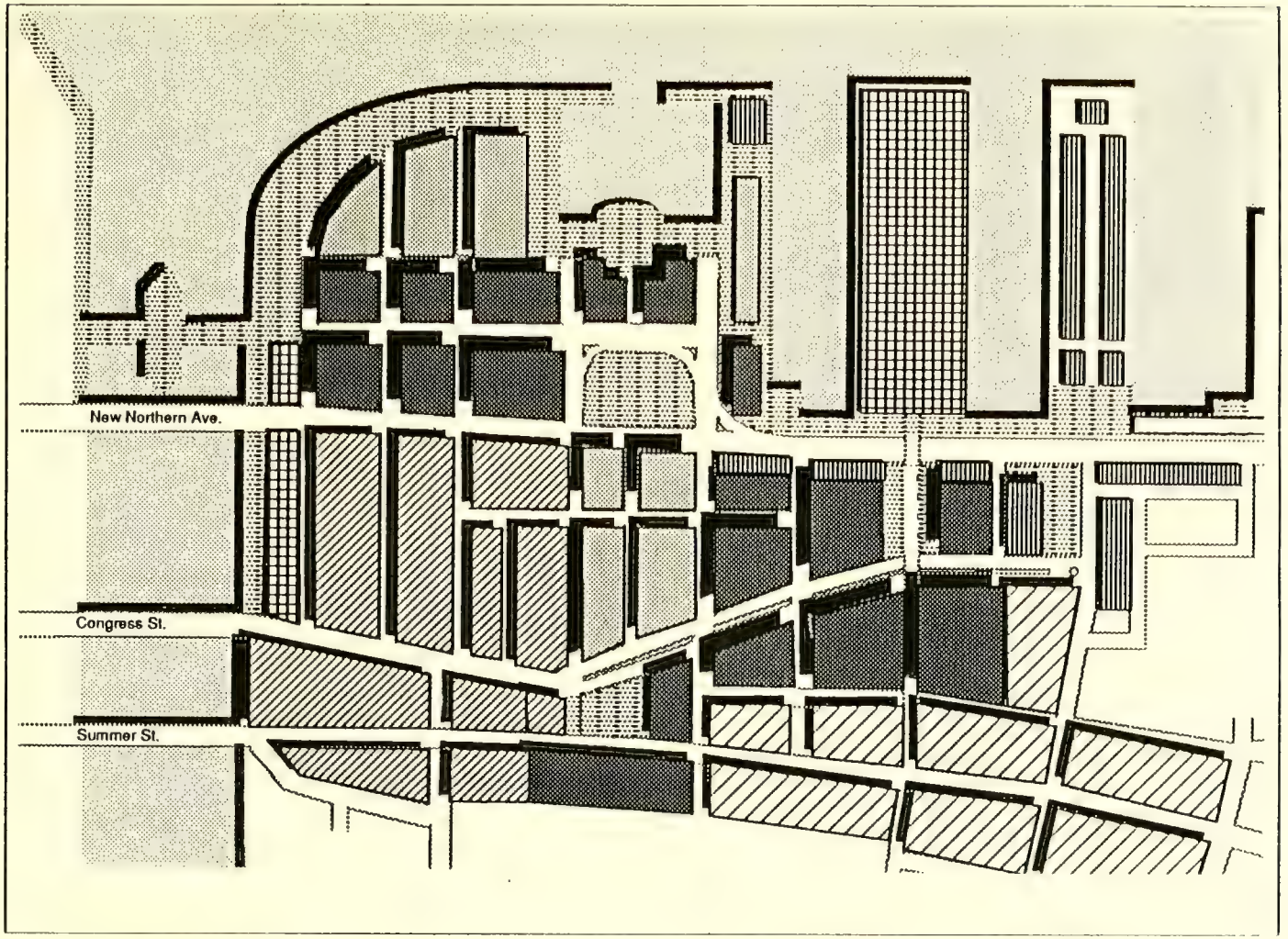




Land use and density

KEY

- Housing
- Commercial/R&D
- Exhibition/cultural
- Water-related
- R&D/industrial
- Boston Wharf: mixed office/ housing/R&D /industrial
- Open Space



4 Street-level Activity Patterns: Ensuring an Active Public Environment

• Shops and Building Entrances: an Active Public Zone

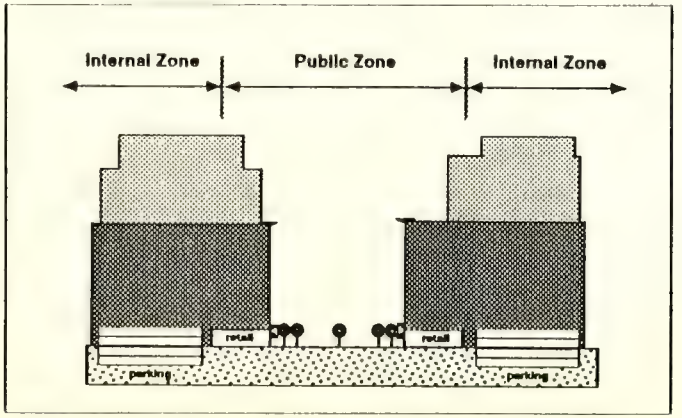
Street-level activity patterns will be organized to create an active public zone along major streets, boulevards, and focal open spaces. A continuous band of retail shops, restaurants, and major building entrances, reinforced by highly visible transit stations, and major activity generators such as Commonwealth Pier and the Children's Museum, will all contribute to the vitality of the public environment. Where current development patterns will not immediately support street-level retail, design guidelines will require that buildings be designed to be able to incorporate such uses in the future.

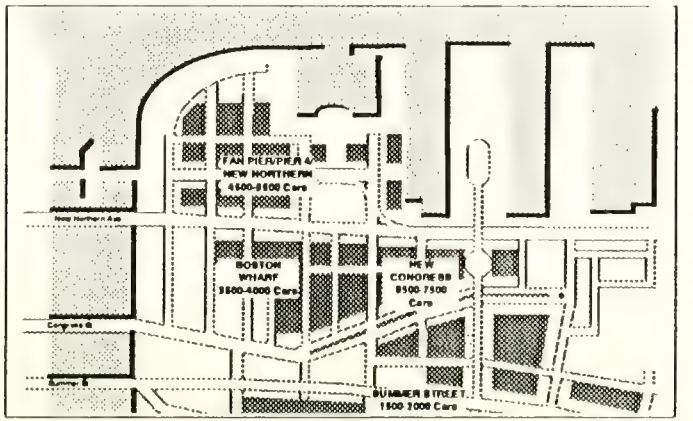
• Parking and Service: an Internal Zone

To avoid impinging on the active public environment, an internal zone, located away from major streets, boulevards, and public open spaces, will define appropriate areas for service activities, including garage entrances and exits, and loading docks. This internal zone will also be the appropriate location for courtyards and other semi-private open space, particularly in residential areas.

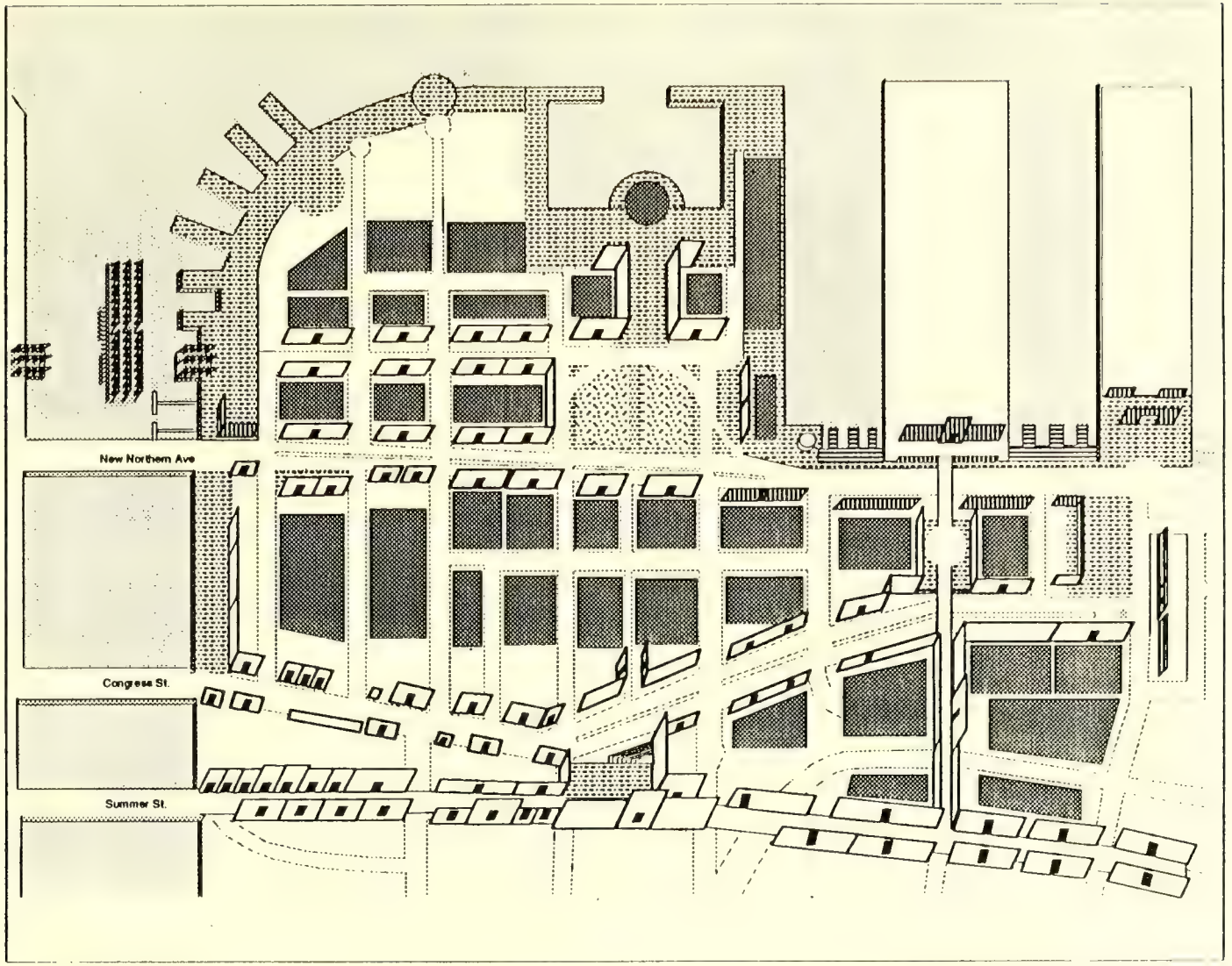
The location of parking garages shall also comply with the requirements of the Boston Transportation Department's South Boston Traffic Study. The facades of parking garages, where they border on public streets, shall comply with the guidelines for Architectural Character.

Left: typical boulevard cross-section.
Right: potential garage locations and sizes





Street-level activity patterns



KEY

- Active retail
- Potential retail
- Water-related retail
- Building entrance
- Internal zone: garages, loading
- Open space

5 Massing, Scale, and Height: building a livable district

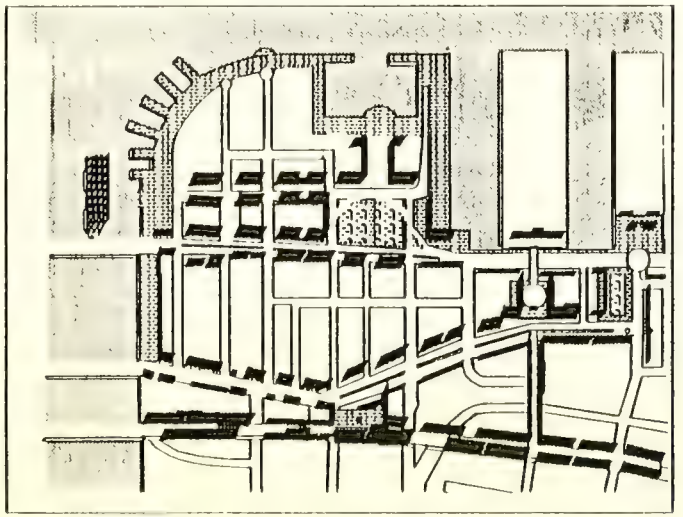
Guidelines for the massing, scale, and height of private development will help establish the public environment within the District. The guidelines will not encourage a "downtown" quality for the district; new development should appear to grow naturally out of the boulevard and waterfront scales already established by the existing fabric of the district. The guidelines seek to achieve the following public policy objectives:

- **Massing: Sun and Light on Public Spaces**

The public open space system which binds the district together must be made usable and inviting. Design guidelines will control building setbacks and heights, to ensure that public parks, boulevards, and focal open spaces receive continuous sunlight at specified times of the day and months of the year.

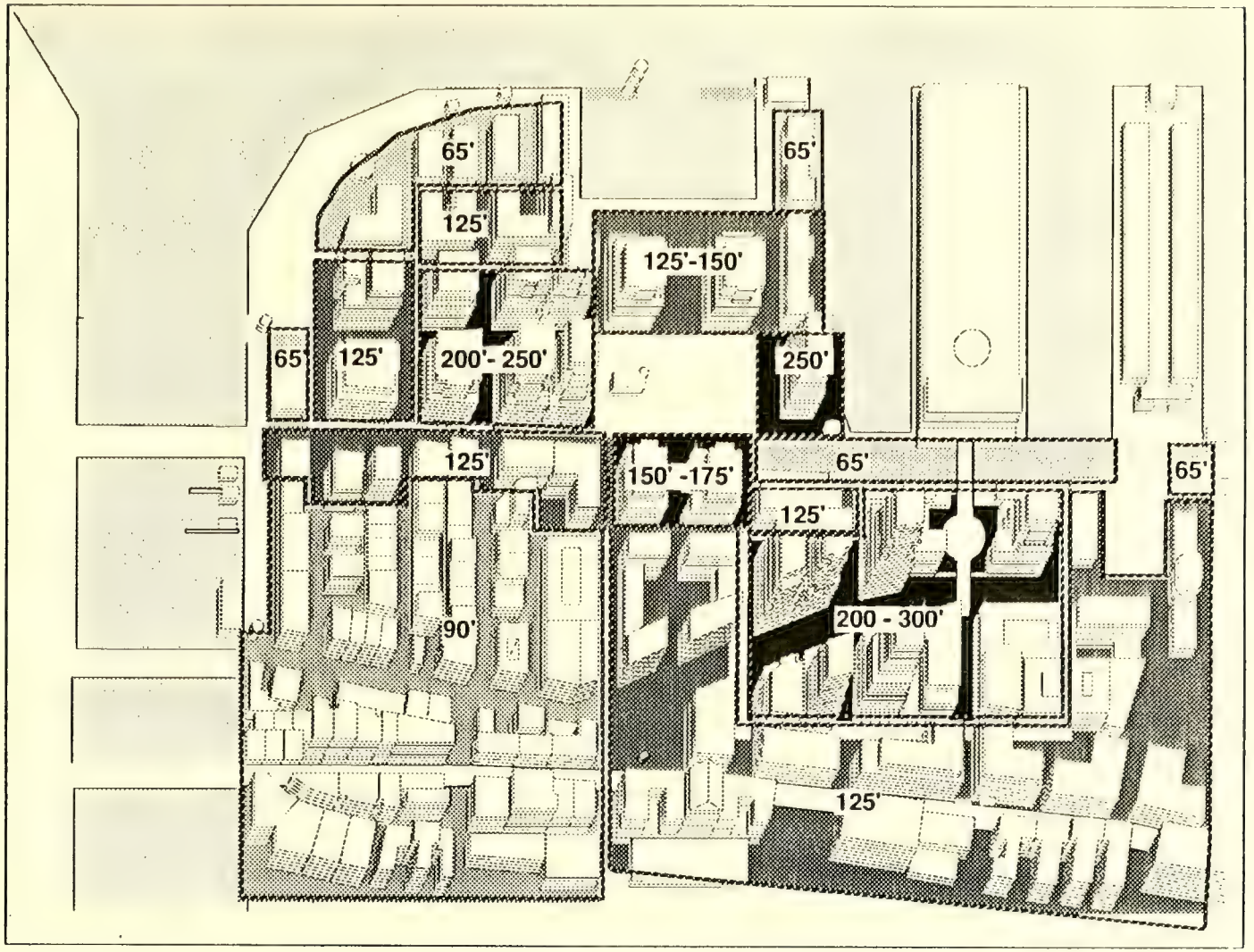
- **Streetwalls: An Appropriate Scale**

Guidelines will ensure that building streetwalls reinforce the desired character of streets and open spaces throughout the district. Along the major boulevards -- New Congress Street, New Northern Avenue, and Summer Street -- a continuous 100' high streetwall, with breaks at every 150' of length, will ensure a continuity between new development and the existing character of the Boston Wharf area. Along secondary streets, a continuous 30' high streetwall will ensure that the district retains a consistent urban character, and not a suburban one. Along the waterfront, a 65' height limit will preserve a comfortable pedestrian scale for the Harborwalk, while a greater variety in building forms will enhance the lively visual quality of the existing waterfront.



Streetwalls will reinforce the character of major boulevards and open spaces

Illustrative concept plan showing building massings and maximum heights



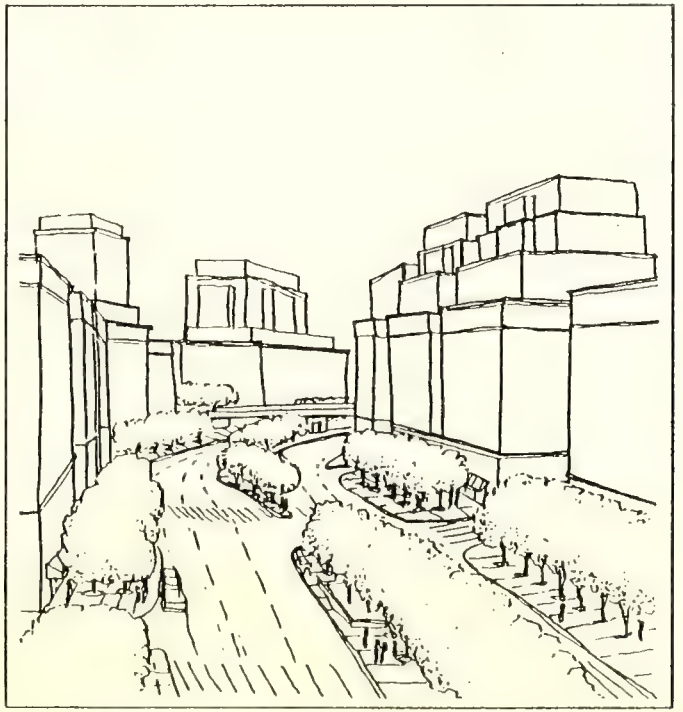
Massing, Scale, and Height: building a livable district

• Height: Reinforcing Land Use and Density

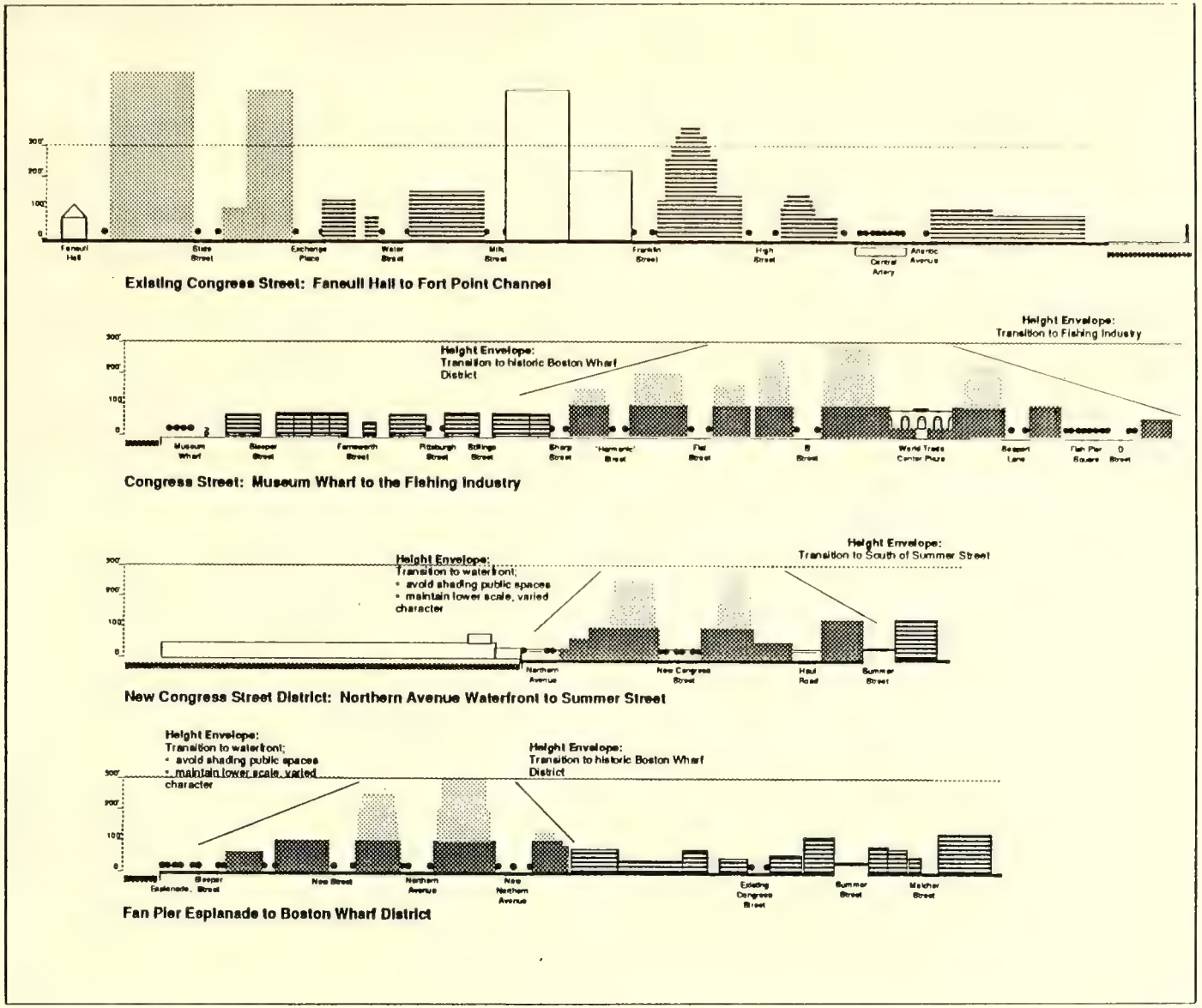
As well as ensuring sun on public open spaces, and defining an appropriate scale for boulevards and streets, guidelines will control maximum heights throughout the district to reinforce land use and density patterns, steering new development toward certain appropriate locations, and away from other, more sensitive areas.

The guidelines will not encourage a "downtown" quality for the district; new development should appear to grow naturally out of the boulevard and waterfront scales already established by the existing fabric of the district. Maximum height will be concentrated along the two corridors of New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue. Heights will gradually taper down from these points toward lower buffer zones bordering the waterfront, the Boston Wharf area, and the adjoining Industrial Study Area.

View of typical boulevard streetscape and building massings along New Congress Street



District does not repeat downtown heights. Building heights taper down from New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue toward waterfront, Boston Wharf, and fishing and industrial areas.


Existing Congress Street: Faneuil Hall to Fort Point Channel
Height Envelope:
Transition to Fishing Industry
Height Envelope:
Transition to historic Boston Wharf
District
Congress Street: Museum Wharf to the Fishing Industry
Height Envelope:
Transition to South of Summer Street
Height Envelope:
Transition to waterfront;
• avoid shading public spaces
• maintain lower scale, varied
character
New Congress Street District: Northern Avenue Waterfront to Summer Street
Height Envelope:
Transition to waterfront;
• avoid shading public spaces
• maintain lower scale, varied
character
Height Envelope:
Transition to historic Boston Wharf
District
Fan Pier Esplanade to Boston Wharf District

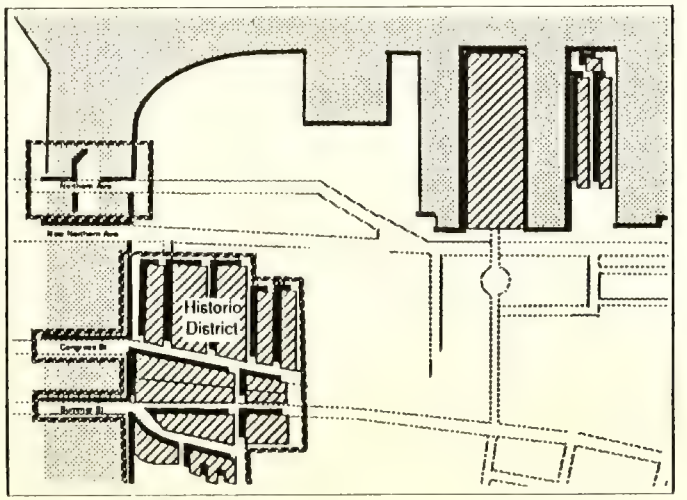
6

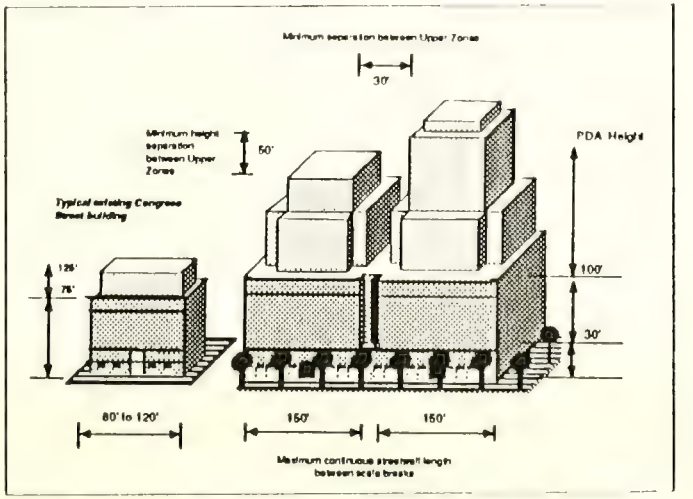
Architectural Character: Creating a District-wide Vocabulary

The goal of guidelines for building facades will be to reinforce the desired character of each quarter, boulevard, street, and focal open space. The guidelines are not intended to prescribe a specific "style" for the district, or to inhibit imagination on the part of individual architects.

- **Boulevard buildings** will help create the desired scale of major boulevards. Within the Streetwall Zone (30'-100'), the use of masonry walls, the vertical articulation of the structural frame, and a continous horizontal emphasis in the attic (top) floor will all ensure continuity with the existing fabric of the Boston Wharf area. A more open and lively Base Zone (0'-30') will provide for continuous street-level retail frontages and building entrances. Upper Zones (over 125'), where permitted within PDAs, will be permitted greater freedom of massing, articulation, and materials.
- **Waterfront buildings** should maintain a pedestrian scale along the Harborwalk. To preserve and enhance the lively maritime quality of the area, waterfront structures will be permitted a greater freedom of massing, articulation, and materials, such as expression of the metal frame, and large glass areas.
- **Historic structures** within the proposed Boston Wharf historic district should be maintained or renovated in accordance with the policies of the Boston Landmarks Commission. New construction in or adjoining a historic structure should be respectful in its scale and materials, without mimicking historic construction.

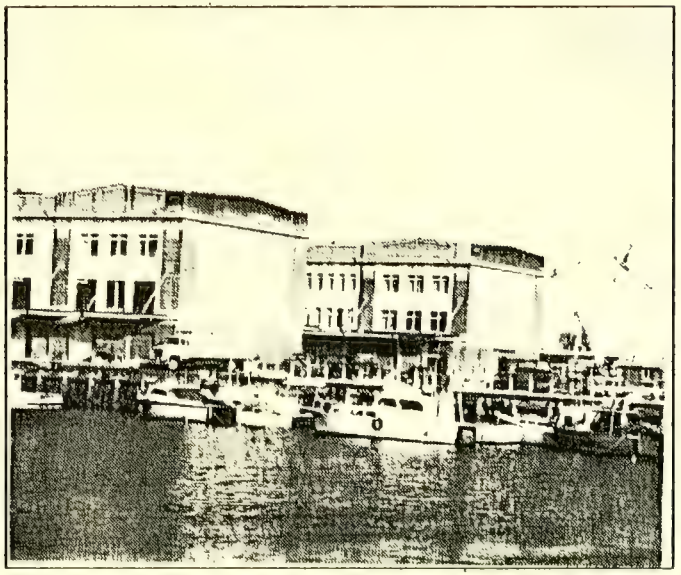
Left: proposed historic district -- Boston Wharf buildings and Fort Point Channel bridges.
Right: architectural guidelines for new buildings.

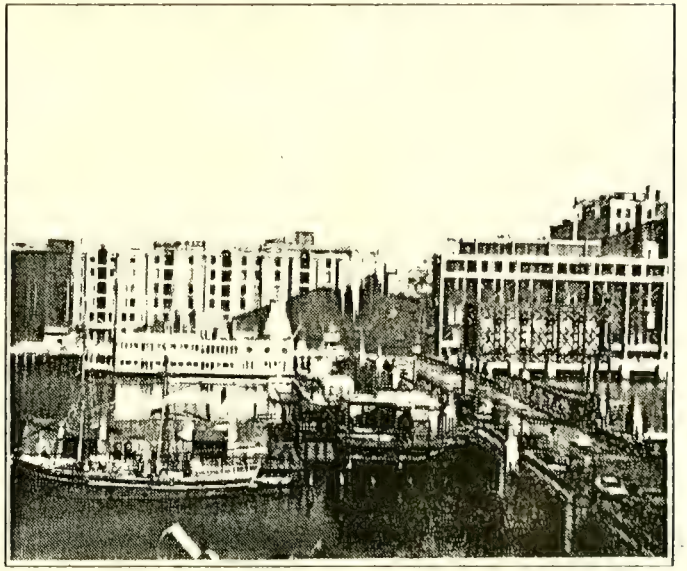




Left: historic Boston Wharf building
Right: Commonwealth Pier

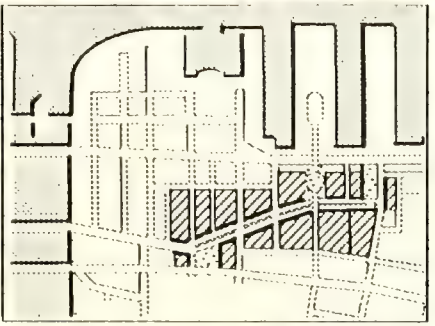
Left: Fish Pier
Right: Congress Street Bridge and new building





Part IV Applying the Guidelines

1. NEW CONGRESS ST: Urban Boulevard



Public Environment

Open Space and Streets: gracious urban boulevard. Broad sidewalks, with double rows of trees, and tree-lined center island.

Principal Open Spaces:
Summer Street Steps, World Trade Center Plaza, Fish Pier Square

Transit: below-grade transitway, with prominent station at New Congress and Viaduct.

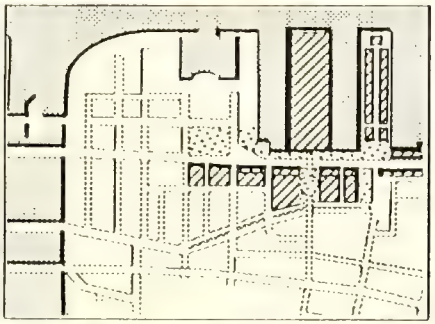
Private Development

Density and Use: urban density, mixed use -- office, retail, R&D, housing, and hotel.

Street-level Activities: continuous active retail, with major building entrances.

Massing, Scale, and Height: continuous masonry streetwall to 100' height. Heights to 300' permitted within PDAs, set back for sun, light, and views.

2. NORTHERN AVENUE: Waterfront Boulevard



Open Space and Streets: lively waterfront boulevard. Broad tree-lined sidewalks, with bulkheads and docks along water.

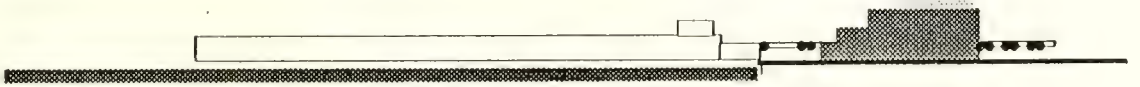
Principal Open Spaces:
Mariners' Park, World Trade Center Plaza, Fish Pier Square

Transit: below-grade transitway, with pedestrian link to station at New Congress and Viaduct.

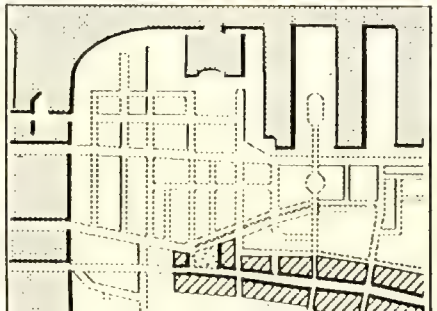
Density and Use: low density water-related uses mixed with commercial; exhibition space at Commonwealth Pier.

Street-level Activities: continuous water-related retail, with major building entrances.

Massing, Scale, and Height: pavilion structures, 65' maximum height, to preserve sun and pedestrian scale. Greater freedom of massing and materials to evoke waterfront character.



3. SUMMER STREET: Urban Boulevard



Open Space and Streets: urban boulevard providing transition from district to adjacent Industrial Study Area. Tree-lined sidewalks, raised roadway on viaduct.

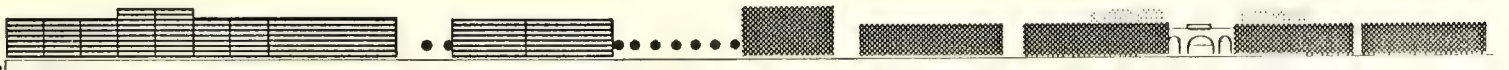
Principal Open Spaces:
Summer Street Steps

Transit: pedestrian link to station at New Congress and Viaduct.

Density and Use: medium density, back office/R&D/ industrial, serving as buffer for existing industrial uses to south.

Street-level Activities: continuous street-level spaces adaptable for retail, with major building entrances.

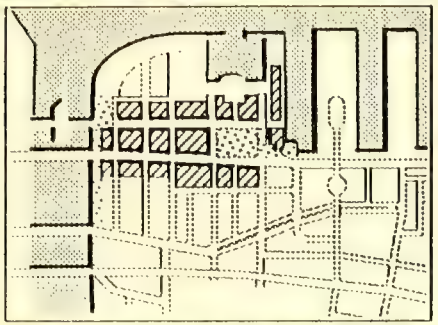
Massing, Scale, and Height: masonry streetwall to 100', with taller penthouses set back for sun, light, and views.



Public Environment

Private Development

4. NEW NORTHERN AVE: Urban Boulevard



Open Space and Streets: gracious urban boulevard, with broad tree-lined sidewalks and center island.

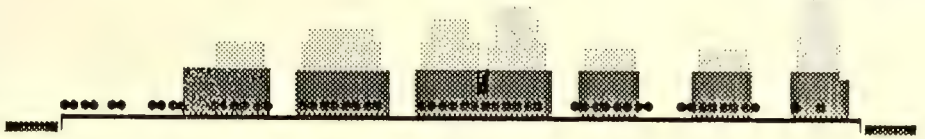
Principal Open Spaces:
Lobster Park, Mariners' Park

Transit: below-grade transitway, with prominent station at New Northern and Pittsburgh.

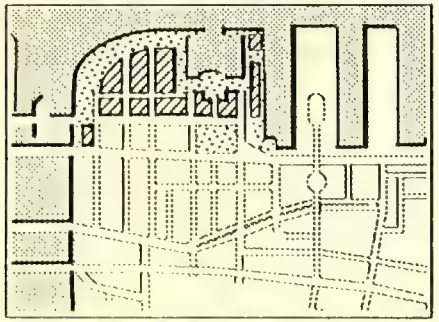
Density and Use: urban density, mainly office.

Street-level Activities: continuous active retail, with major building entrances.

Massing, Scale, and Height: masonry streetwall to 100' height. Taller heights to 250' permitted within PDAs, set back for sun, light, and views. Infill on south side compatible in scale and character with historic Boston Wharf buildings.



5. FAN PIER/PIER 4: Public Waterfront



Open Space: continuous accessible public waterfront, offering mixture of active and passive uses. Landscaped waterfront park near residential areas, more active urban character at Waterplaza.

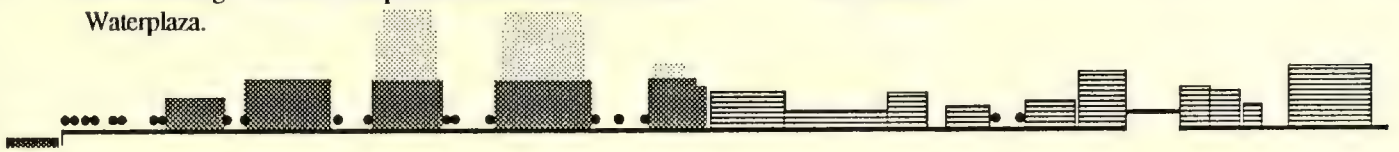
Principal Open Spaces:
Lobster Park, Pier 4 Waterplaza

Transit: pedestrian link to transit station at New Northern and Pittsburgh. Water transportation at Lobster Park and Waterplaza.

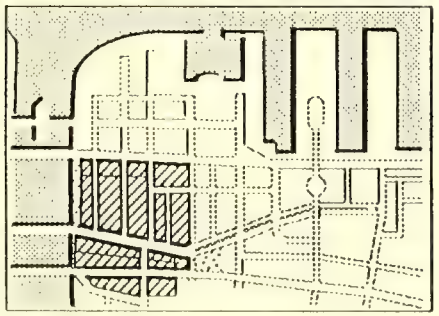
Density and Use: medium density residential, with higher density commercial around Waterplaza.

Street-level Activities: continuous retail and major building entrances around Waterplaza.

Massing, Scale, and Height: low-rise structures, 65' maximum height, preserve sun and pedestrian scale. Greater freedom of massing and materials to evoke waterfront character.



6. BOSTON WHARF: Historic area



Open Space and Streets: extend waterfront promenade from Museum Wharf north to New Northern, and south to Summer. Rebuild streets to enhance historic character of area. Preserve historic bridges across Fort Point Channel.

Principal Open Spaces:
Museum Wharf

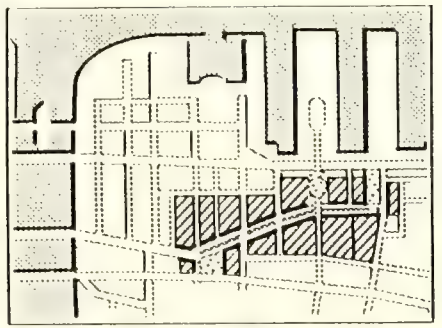
Transit: pedestrian link to transit station at New Northern and Pittsburgh.

Density and Use: maintain current mix of office, residential, industrial, and cultural uses.

Street-level activities: adapt to retail uses on Congress and Summer without harming historic character.

Massing, Scale, and Height: preserve historic Boston Wharf buildings. New infill construction to be compatible in scale and character.

1. New Congress Street: Urban Boulevard

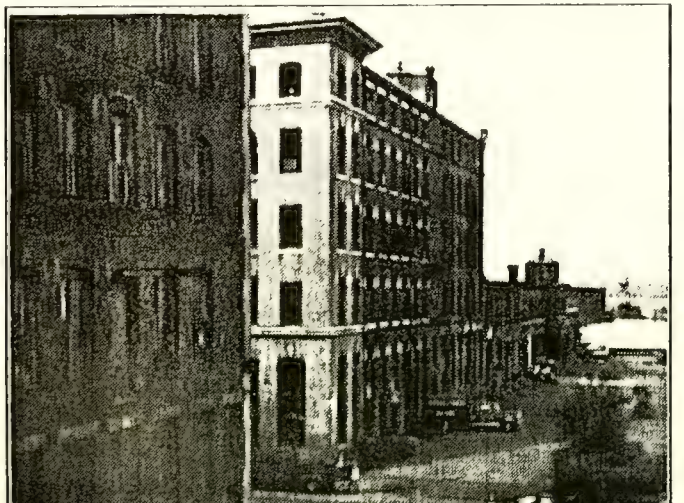


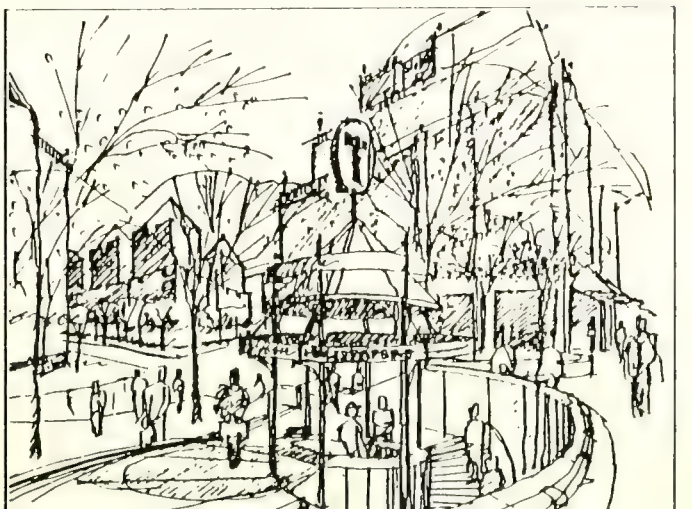
Above: locator map

Today an area of parking lots and one-story buildings, New Congress Street will be a vital, mixed-use urban boulevard, providing a continuous link from City Hall and downtown all the way to the Fish Pier. By concentrating denser development along New Congress Street, development pressures will be relieved on the waterfront to the north, Summer Street to the south, and the fishing industry to the east. A tree-lined central island and broad sidewalks with double rows of trees and continuous active street-level uses will contribute to the gracious character of the boulevard.

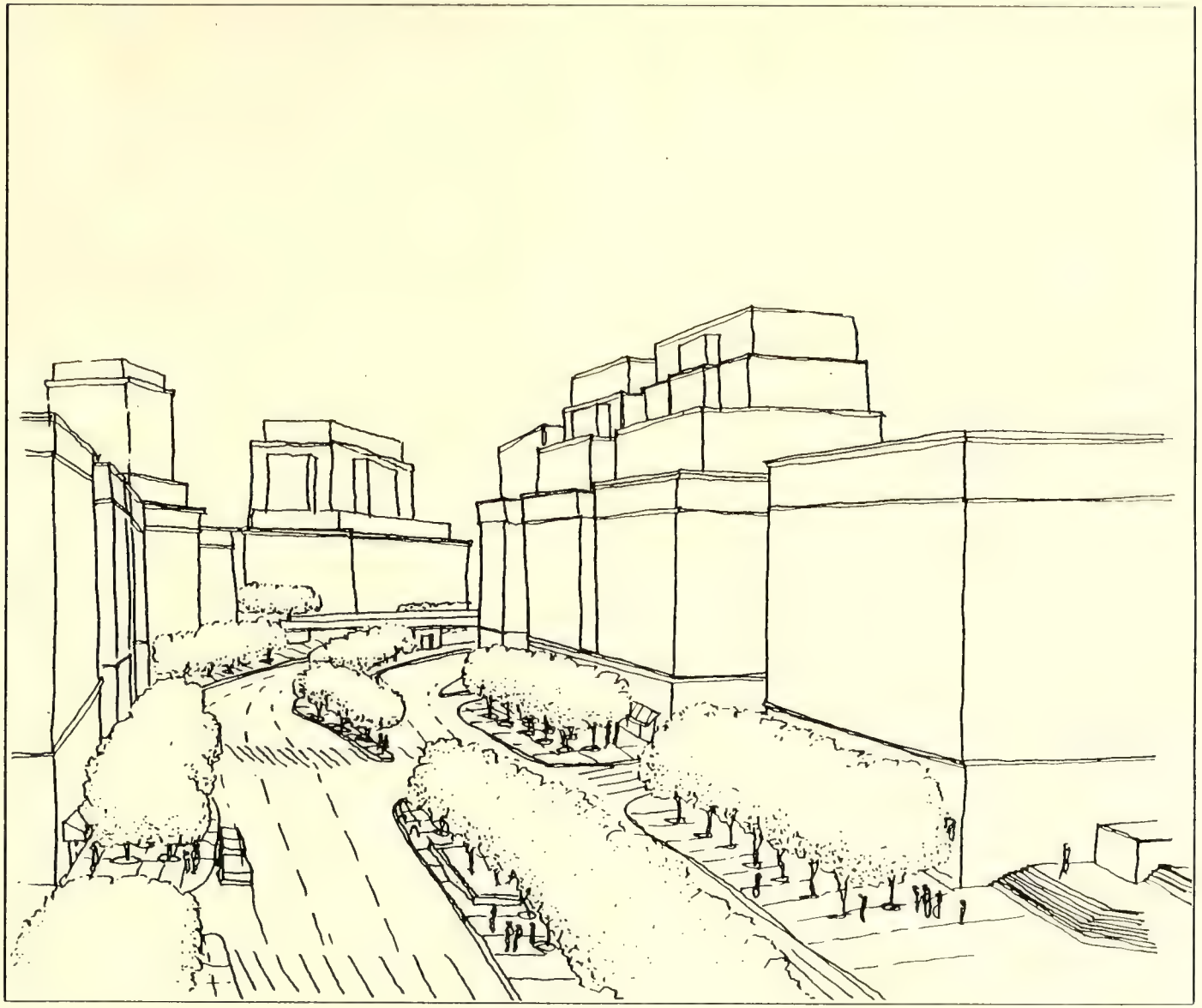
Three major public open spaces -- Summer Street Steps, World Trade Center Square, and Fish Pier Square -- will punctuate the length of New Congress Street. The heights and massings of new private development will extend the streetwall character of existing Congress Street within the Boston Wharf area. Taller buildings, where permitted under Planned Development Area (PDA) regulations, will be set back and modulated to ensure sun, light, and views on public streetscapes and open spaces.

Left: view of Congress Street as it ends today
Right: New Congress Street as it will appear in the future





view of New Congress Street (sketch by Todd Lee in progress)

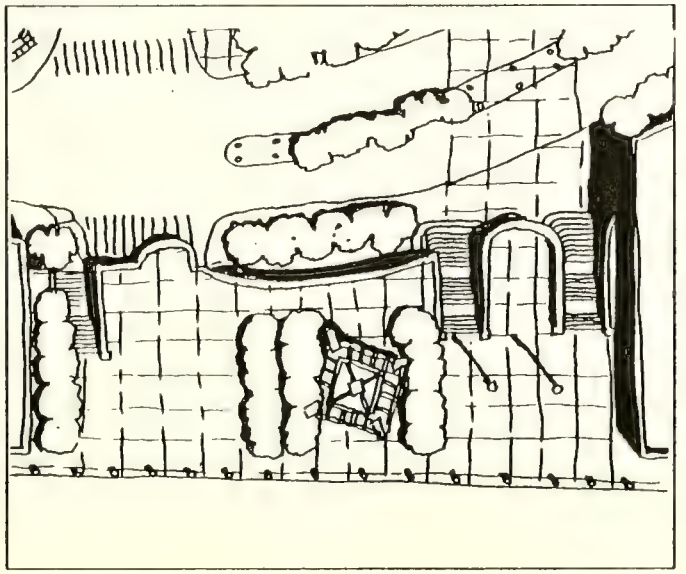


Public Environment

• Principal Open Spaces

Three key public open spaces will punctuate the length of New Congress Street. The Summer Street Steps will launch the new boulevard, at the point where new development meets the existing Boston Wharf area. The World Trade Center Plaza will be a focal point at the midpoint of the boulevard, taking advantage of the energy generated by the exhibition space at Commonwealth Pier. The Fish Pier Square will end the boulevard by bringing together the New Congress Street quarter and the existing fishing industry.

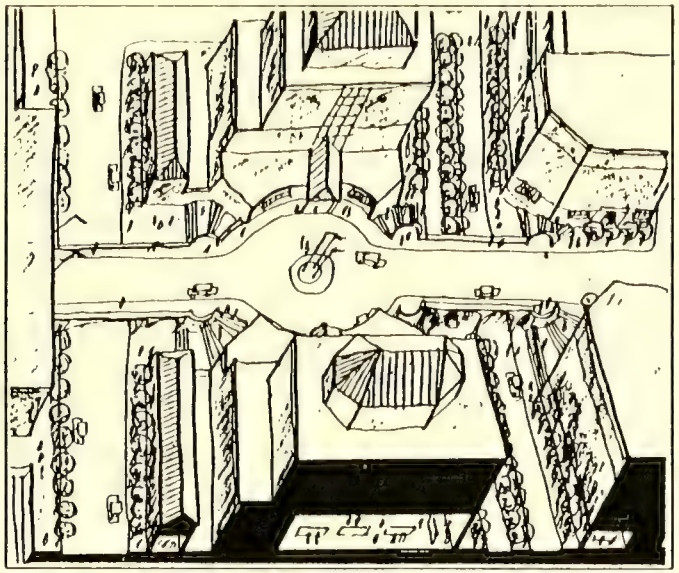
Summer Street Steps and "Walk to the Water"



This active public space will form the junction of existing and New Congress Streets. The "Walk to the Water," a pedestrian route and view corridor from the Steps north along "Harmonic" Street to Pier 4 and the waterfront, will help knit Summer Street, New Congress Street, Northern Avenue, and the waterfront into a coherent district.

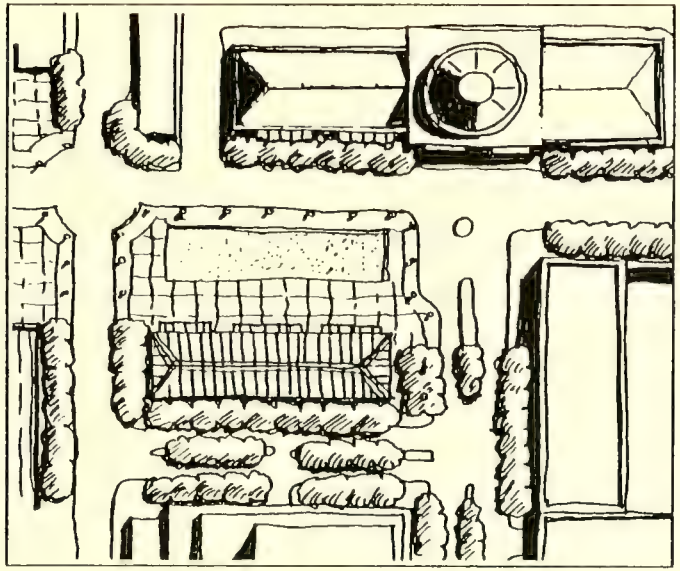
To accommodate the 25' grade change, the plaza should be designed as a dramatic series of terraces and steps, with a fountain, news kiosk, or similar element as a focal point. Continuous street-level retail, and the proposed USPS development on Summer Street, will also generate pedestrian activity. There is the possibility of an MBTA bus station located beneath the plaza, with excellent access to the Seaport Access Road.

World Trade Center Square



This active public space will mark the mid-point of New Congress Street, with Commonwealth Pier and the World Trade Center expansion as primary activity generators. Continous storefronts, major building entrances, and the MBTA station will enliven a major public plaza on New Congress Street. A truly public through-block pedestrian arcade, open twenty-four-hours-a-day, will link the plaza to Commonwealth Pier and the Northern Avenue waterfront, and help attract visitors from Commonwealth Pier into the New Congress Street district. A raised court at Viaduct Street level, accesible by public stairs and elevators, will offer framed views of the Beaux-Arts Commonwealth Pier facade and the water.

Fish Pier Square



This public space will serve as the physical and symbolic center of the fishing industry, and as the meeting point between the New Congress Street/Piers area and the Industrial Study area, which begins at D Street. An open space will link the end of New Congress, the waterfront, and a new park at the landward end of the Fish Pier. A mixture of fishing boats, fish storage, marketing, and processing uses, and water-related shops and restaurants, will ensure a lively maritime character for the square.

• Streetscape Design

To create the desired character of the public environment, streetscape designs should reflect the hierarchy of streets and public spaces.

New Congress Street will be treated as a gracious urban boulevard, with 24' wide sidewalks. Special paving may be used at building entrances, sidewalk cafes, and other appropriate locations. Double rows of trees, spaced 15' apart, will provide shaded allees for pedestrians, while leaving a clear zone for shoppers along the building face.

A 20' wide central island (narrowing down to 8' at turning lanes where required) with a single row of trees spaced 25' apart, will reinforce the desired boulevard quality of New Congress Street. The island will use native plantings in continuous planting beds, with special paving at crosswalks.

Secondary streets, including "Sharp," "Flat," Calvin Place Extension, B, D, and Seaport Lane, will be treated as public streets, with continuous 12' wide sidewalks, and single rows of trees spaced 25' apart. Viaduct Street should be treated as a public street, with a continuous sidewalk, similar in design to those throughout the quarter, extending to the building face on both sides. "Harmonic" Street should be treated as a 40' wide pedestrian way, with double rows of trees, and granite paving in the center for service and emergency vehicles.

• Mass Transit

The MBTA's current plans call for a below-grade transitway under New Congress Street, to avoid negative impacts on the surface environment. A highly visible station will be incorporated into the Massport Phase I garage at Viaduct Street. The station should be visible and accessible from New Congress, Viaduct, and Summer Streets. Its location and design should be coordinated with street-level activities fronting on the World Trade Center plaza at the New Congress/Viaduct intersection.

STREETSCAPE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

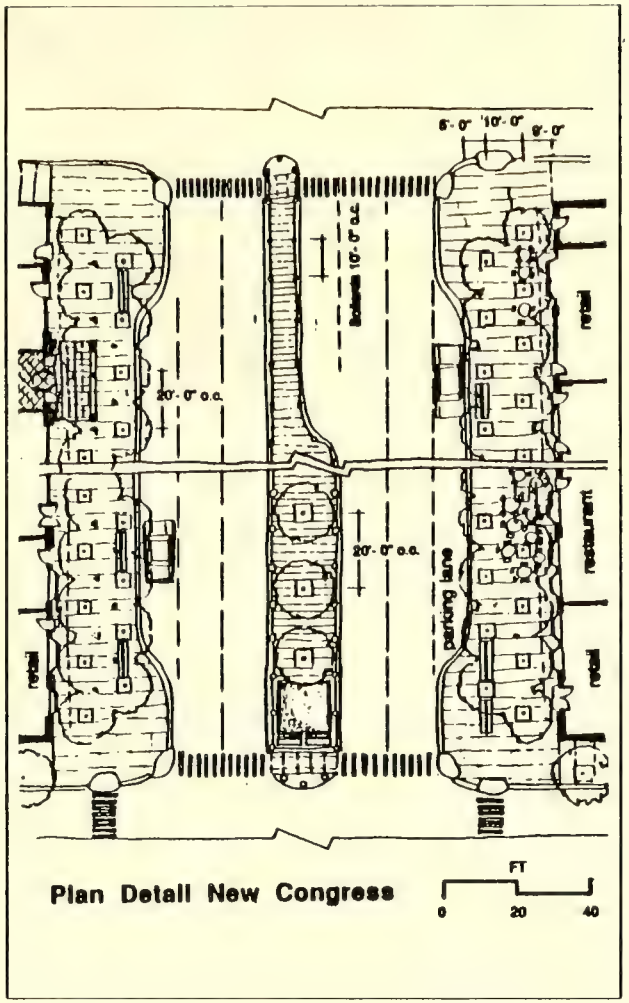
Paving and curbs: decorative paving such as brick or granite, with granite curbs.

Trees: a mixture of large native deciduous trees, including Sweetgum, Red Oak, and London Plane, with flowering trees such as Horse Chestnut in center islands.

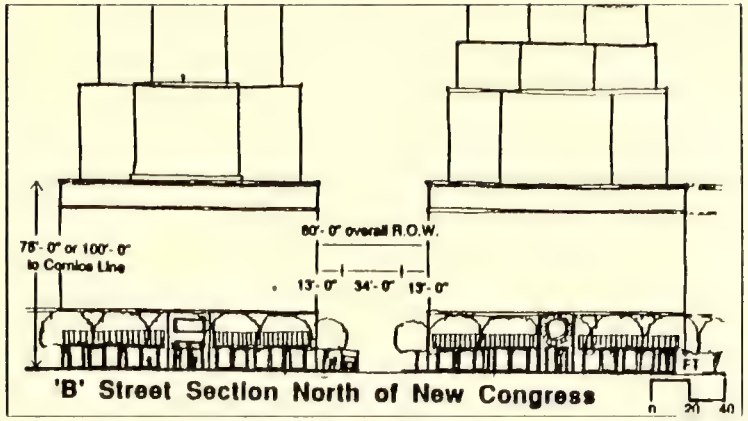
Plantings: native seaside plants such as *rosa rugosa*.

Lights: double acorns typical, with quad acorns at focal public spaces.

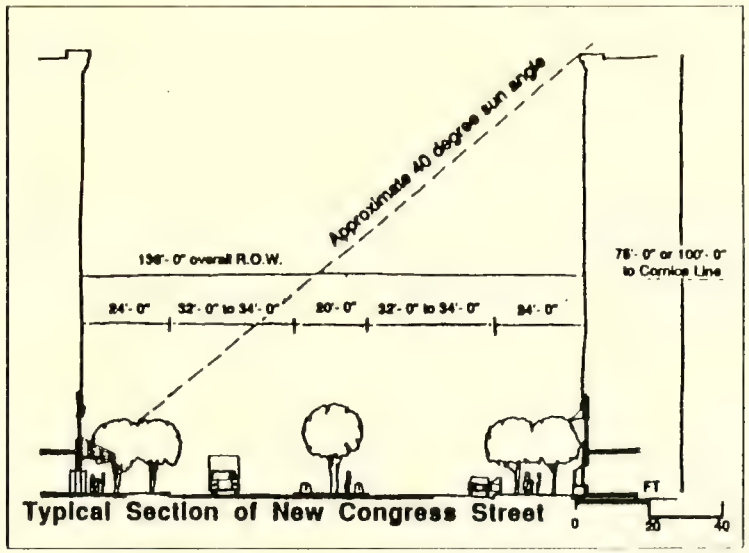
Conceptual design studies for New Congress Street and secondary streets



Plan Detail New Congress

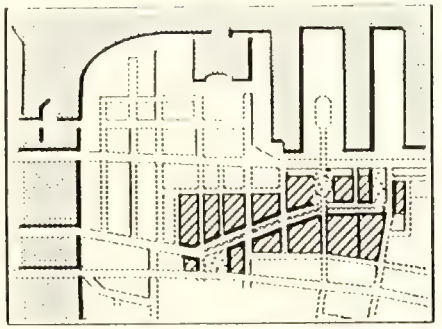


'B' Street Section North of New Congress



Typical Section of New Congress Street

Private Development



Above: locator map

• Land Use and Density

New Congress Street will serve as the focus for higher density uses within the New Congress Street quarter of the district, to reduce development pressures on sensitive adjoining areas -- the Northern Avenue waterfront , the edge of the Boston Whaf area, and the existing fishing and industrial uses east of D Street and south of Summer Street. Uses along New Congress Street are anticipated to be primarily commercial, but with the possibility of other uses, including hotel, R&D, and residential (between "Sharp" and "Flat" Streets).

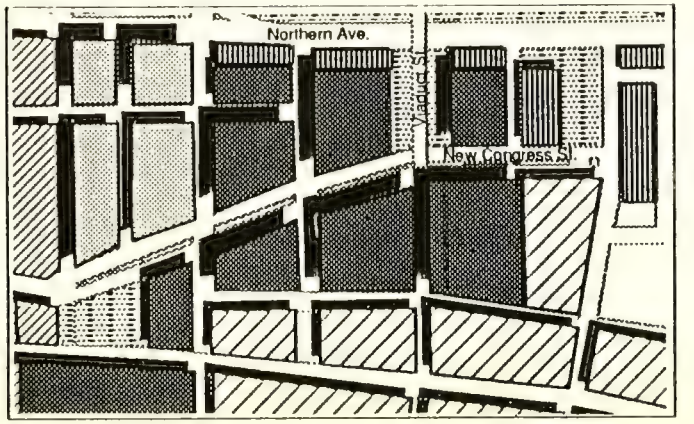
• Street-level Activities

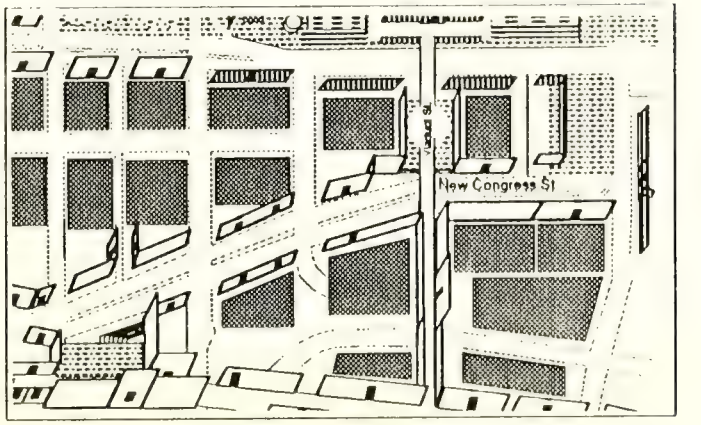
A public zone along New Congress Street will contain active retail uses and major building entries. An internal zone, serviced from the side streets, will accomodate parking garage entrances and exits, loading docks, and other less active street-level uses. This internal zone will also be the appropriate location for courtyards and other semi-private open space, particularly in residential areas.

The location of parking garages shall also comply with the requirements of the Boston Transportation Department's South Boston Traffic Study. The facades of parking garages, where they border on public streets, shall comply with the guidelines for Architectural Character.

Left: Land uses
- housing
- commercial
- water-related
- R&D/industrial

Right: Street-level activities
- active retail
- water-related
- building entrance
- internal zone





• Building Massing, Scale, and Height

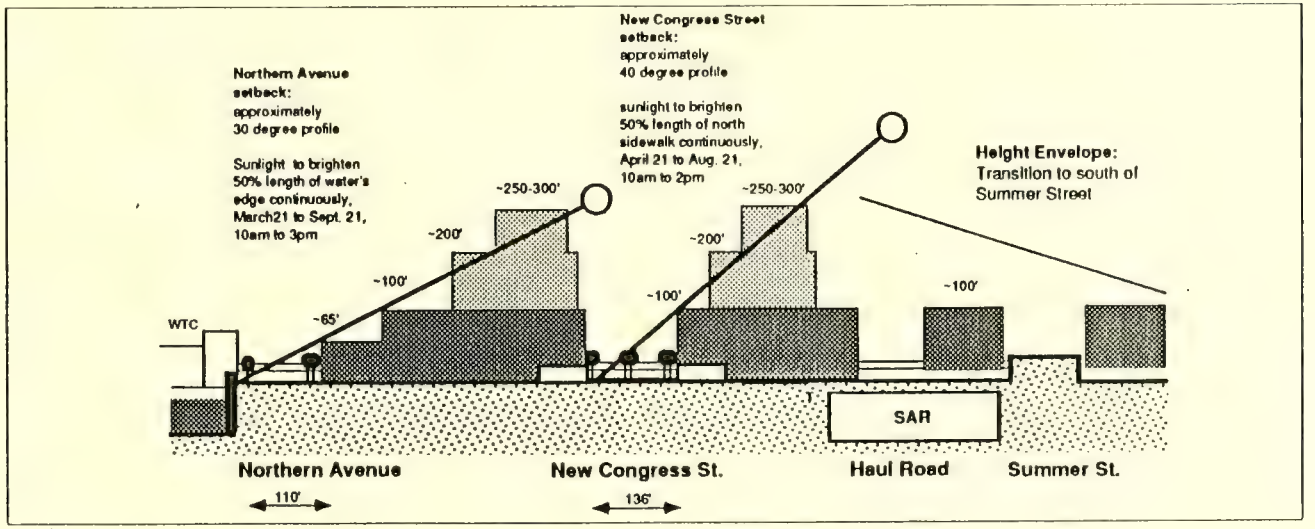
Guidelines for the massing, scale, and height of private development will help establish the desired character of the public environment along New Congress Street, maintain continuity with the existing scale of the Boston Wharf area, and reinforce district-wide land use and density patterns.

- **Streetwalls:** in the Base Zone (0-30') and the Streetwall Zone (30'-100'), buildings shall hold the street line. Parcels on New Congress Street shall not present an unbroken streetwall frontage longer than 150', to be consistent in scale with the existing character of Congress Street.

- **Sun and light:** where greater height is permitted for buildings within a PDA, above 100' buildings shall set back from the street to ensure sun and light on public streetscapes, and to avoid visually overpowering the adjacent Boston Wharf area. On the south side of the street, buildings shall set back to permit sun to strike the full width of the north sidewalk for at least 50% of its length continuously during the times of greatest pedestrian use -- between 10 AM and 2 PM (EST), from late spring to late summer (April 21 to August 21).

On the north side of New Congress Street and on side streets, buildings shall set back a minimum of 5' at 100' height. With each additional 25' of height, another 5' setback is required. Buildings on the north side of New Congress Street must also satisfy the setback requirements from existing Northern Avenue, where they apply.

Setback requirements for New Congress Street



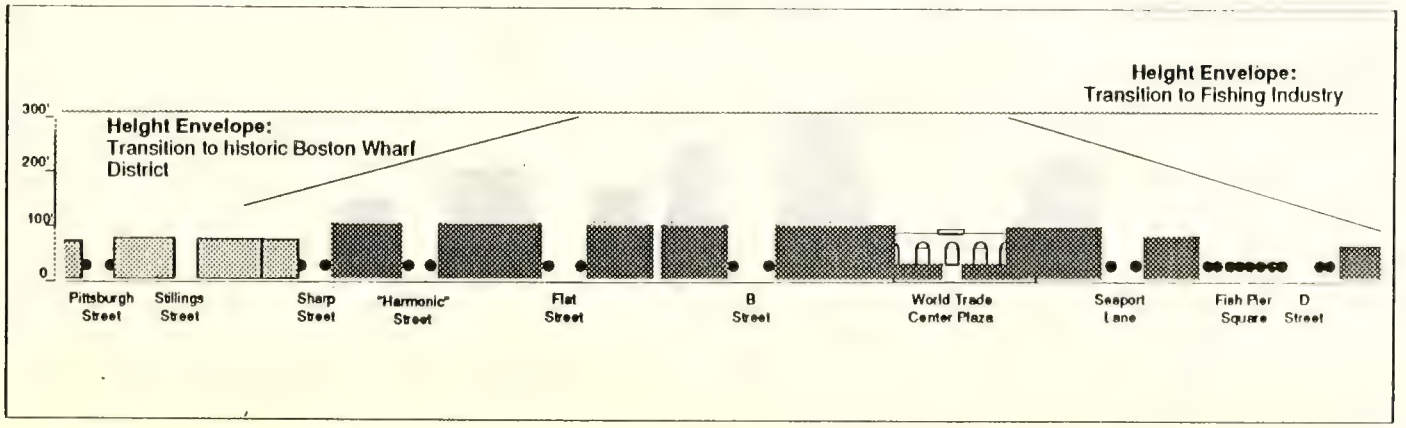
- Heights

Upper Zones of buildings up to 125' high should be set back from the street and treated in a manner similar to existing penthouses within the Boston Wharf area.

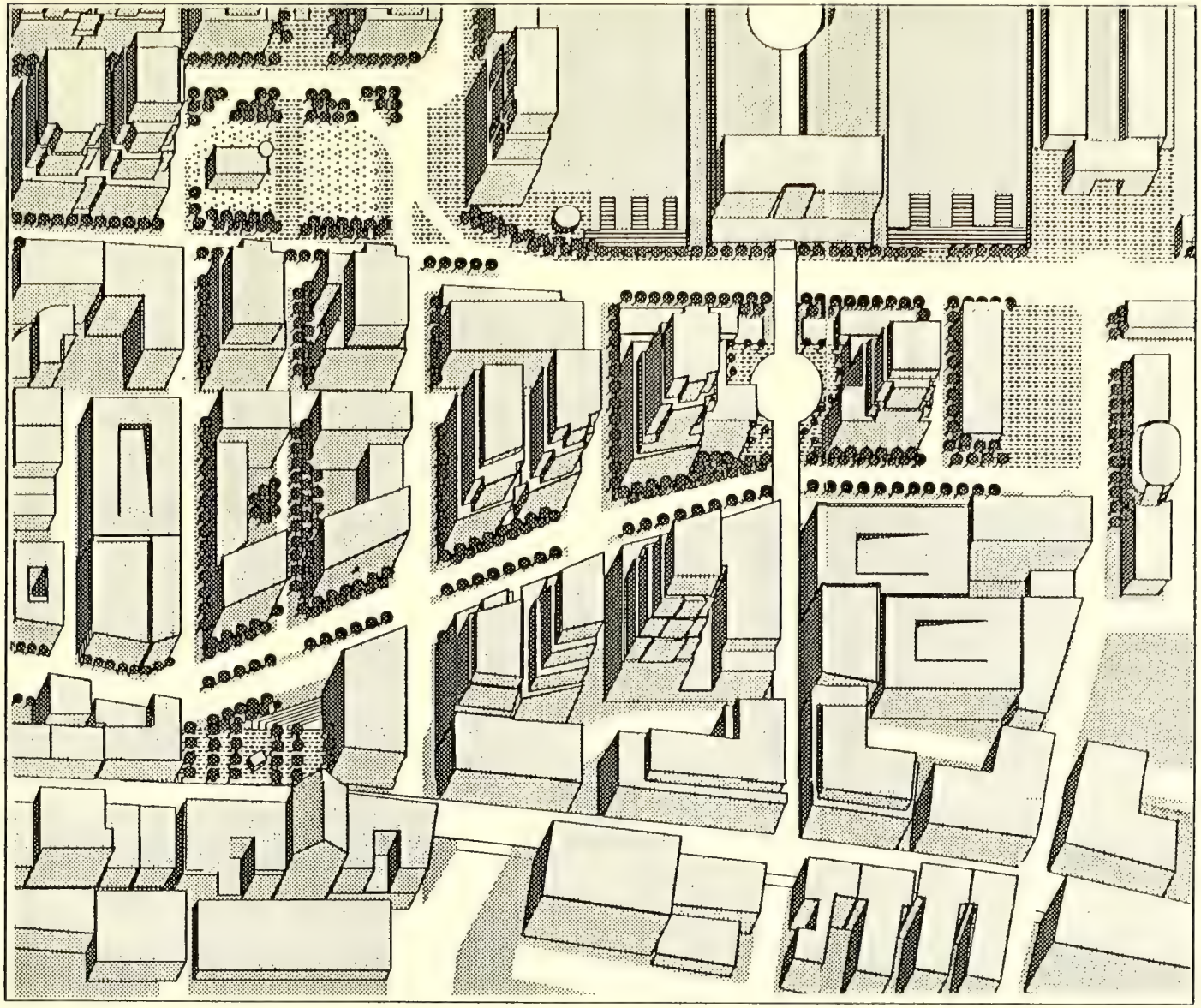
Upper Zones of buildings over 125' high should taper upwards from 125' adjoining Summer Street and the fishing industry, and from 200' adjoining the Boston-Wharf area, to a maximum of 300' between "Flat" and Viaduct Streets. Front faces of Upper Zones should be parallel to New Congress Street to a height of at least 200'. Faces of Upper Zones visible from public streets and open spaces, even where not subject to other setback requirements, should display vertical and horizontal articulation.

Where a block is large enough to require a Streetwall break (over 150' frontage along New Congress Street) the massing of Upper Zones should reflect the articulation of Streetwall masses -- where the streetwall is broken into two distinct masses, for example, the Upper Zones should also be broken into two distinct masses. Such separate Upper Zones should be spaced at least 30' apart. Their height should vary according to the tapering of heights along New Congress Street described above. The heights of separate Upper Zones within a single block should vary by at least 50'.

Tapering of building heights along New Congress Street



Illustrative view of building massings along New Congress Street



• Architectural Character

Architectural designs for new development along New Congress Street should reinforce its character as a major urban boulevard, while remaining compatible in scale and articulation with the existing fabric of the Boston Wharf area. The guidelines are not intended to prescribe a specific "style" for New Congress Street, or to inhibit creativity on the part of individual architects.

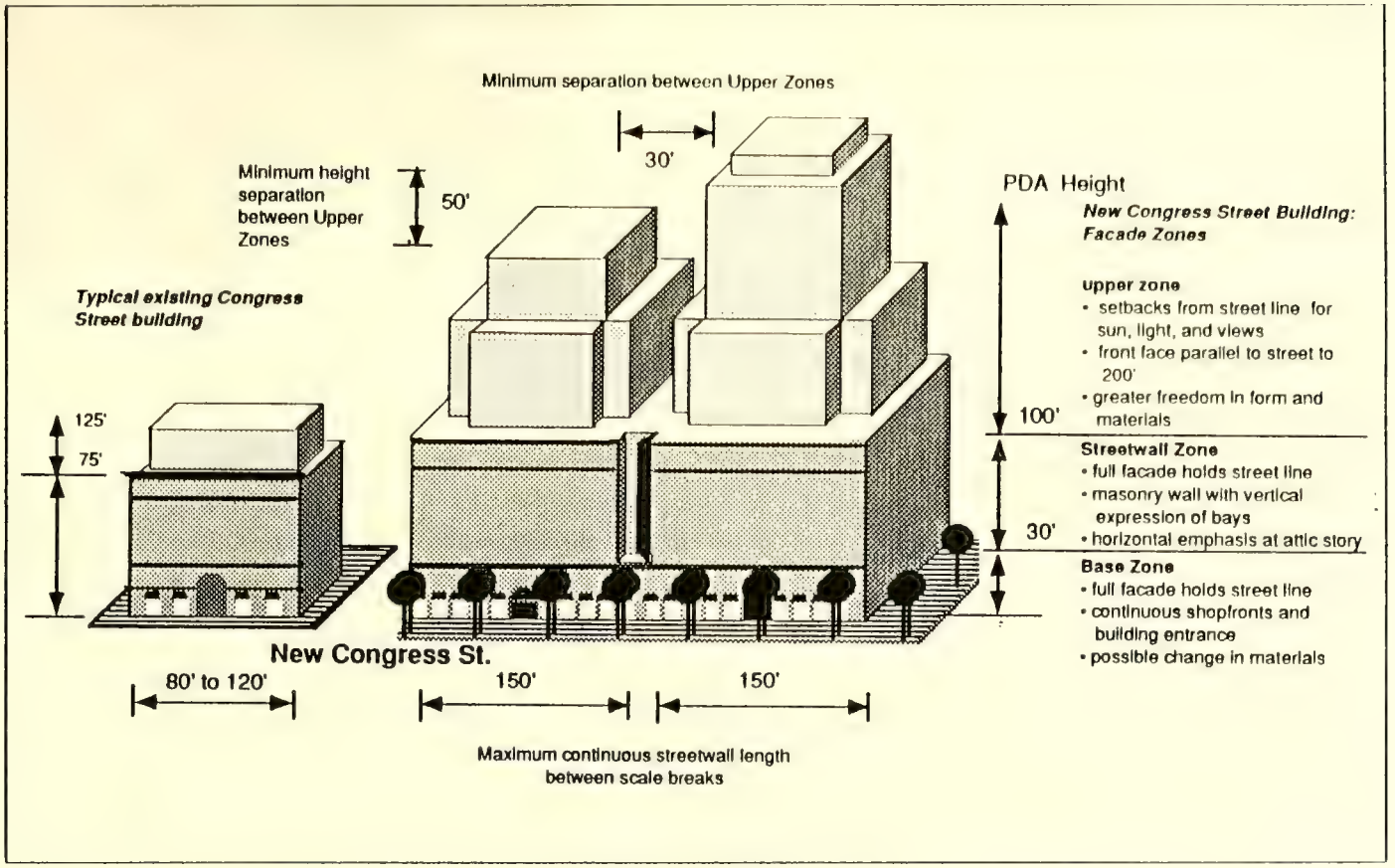
Streetwall Zone (30-100'): facades should be predominantly masonry, with vertically proportioned window openings set back from the wall plane. The structural bays should be emphasized by vertical elements. There should be a horizontal emphasis at the transition from the Base to Streetwall Zones, and at the top (attic) story, consistent with the existing cornice lines of existing buildings along Congress Street. A distinction between the main boulevard facade and secondary side street facades is permitted through changes in materials and articulation.

Base Zone (0-30'): a change in materials, such as stone or metal, is permitted. Large storefront windows and door openings are encouraged, to accomadate active street-level uses.

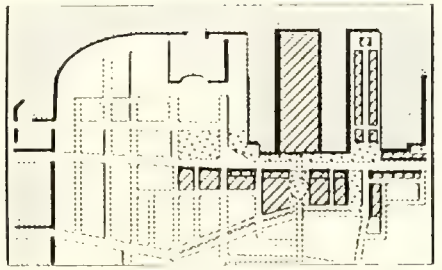
Upper Zones: where greater height is permitted within PDAs, buildings should set back in gradual increments, both horizontally and vertically. A change in materials and larger areas of glazing are permitted, but buildings should continue to show a clear articulation of the structural frame, emphasizing the vertical proportion of bays and window openings. Reflective glass, or all-glass curtain walls, will not be permitted.

Existing building streetwalls along Congress Street in the Boston Wharf area

Guidelines for building massing, scale, and architectural character along New Congress Street


Minimum separation between Upper Zones
30'
Minimum height separation between Upper Zones
50'
PDA Height
New Congress Street Building: Facade Zones
upper zone
• setbacks from street line for sun, light, and views
• front face parallel to street to 200'
• greater freedom in form and materials
100'
Streetwall Zone
• full facade holds street line
• masonry wall with vertical expression of bays
• horizontal emphasis at attic story
30'
Base Zone
• full facade holds street line
• continuous shopfronts and building entrance
• possible change in materials
Typical existing Congress Street building
125'
75'
New Congress St.
80' to 120'
150'
150'
Maximum continuous streetwall length between scale breaks

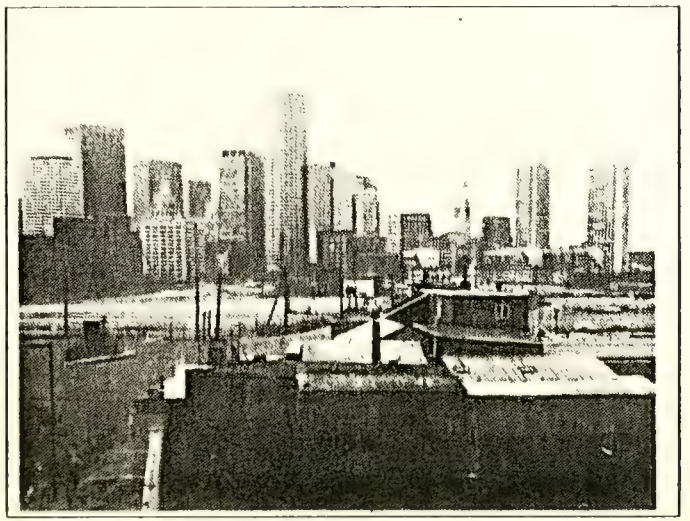
2. Northern Avenue Waterfront: Maritime Boulevard



Above: locator map

Already alive with fishing and lobster boats, seafood restaurants, and the activities of Commonwealth Pier, existing Northern Avenue from Mariners' Park east will draw upon these resources to enhance its character as a vital, mixed-use waterfront boulevard. Broad tree-lined sidewalks, fronted by continuous active water-related retail and restaurant uses, will contribute to the lively maritime character of the boulevard.

Building heights and massings will preserve the low-scaled, waterfront scale of Northern Avenue, and defer to the mounumental Beaux-Arts facade of Commonwealth Pier. Taller buildings, where permitted in adjacent areas under Planned Development Area (PDA) regulations, will be set back and modulated to ensure sun on public streetscapes and open spaces.

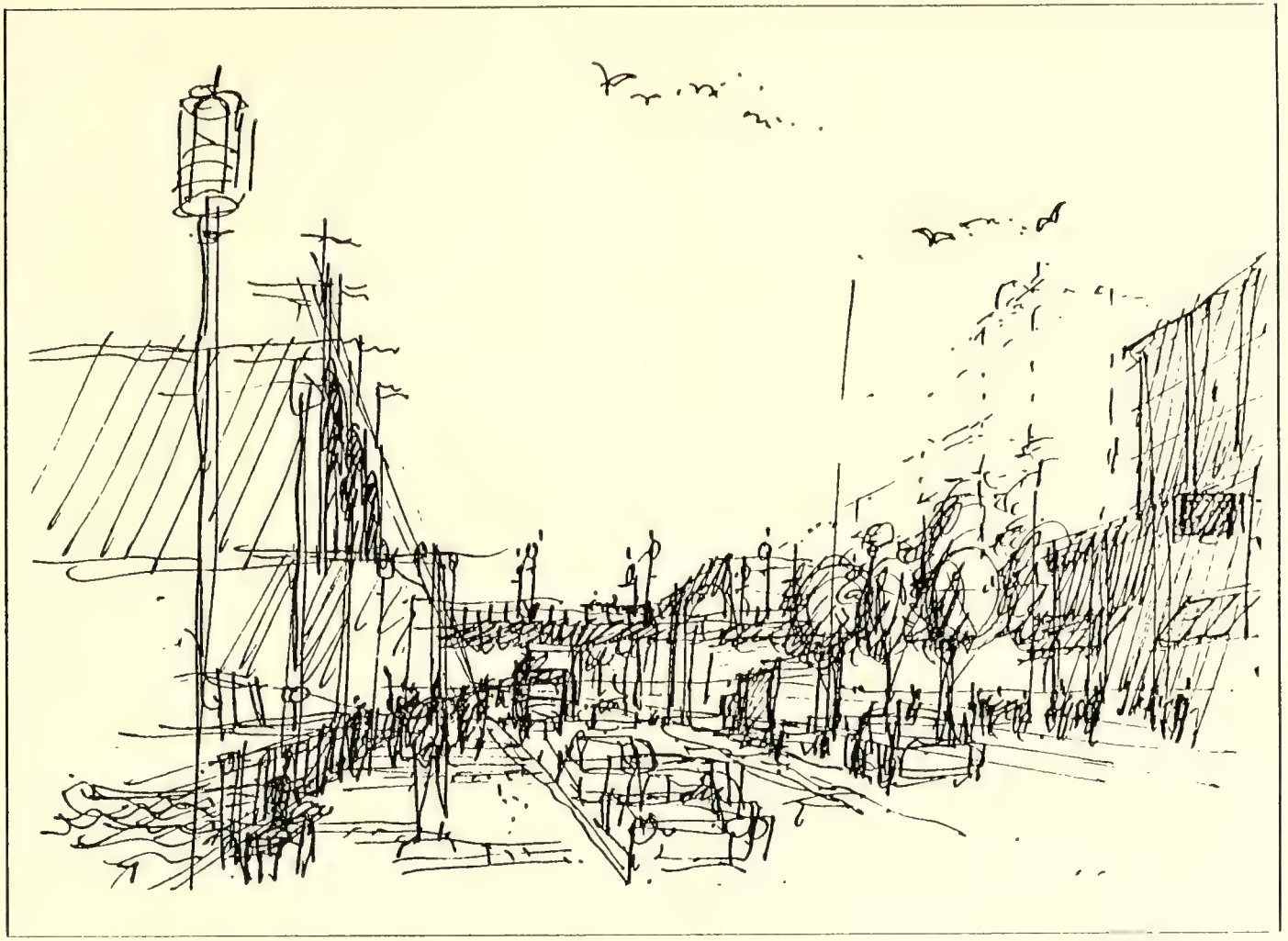


Northern Avenue waterfront today

• Principal Open Spaces

Three major public open spaces will punctuate the length of the Northern Avenue waterfront, which will also serve as an extension of the regional Harborwalk system. **Mariners' Park,** located at the junction of the waterfront with the denser commercial development along New Northern Avenue to the west ,will link together different routes through the district. (See *IV.4, New Northern Avenue*, for full description.) At the midpoint of Northern Avenue, a public through-block pedestrian arcade will link Commonwealth Pier and the Northern Avenue waterfront to **World Trade Center Square,** an active public space at the midpoint of New Congress Street. (See *IV.1, New Congress Street*, for full description.) At the end of the Northern Avenue waterfront, **Fish Pier Square** serves as the physical and symbolic center of the fishing industry. (See *IV.1, New Congress Street*, for full description.)

Northern Avenue waterfront: a major link in the District's open space system (sketch by Todd Lee in progress)



Public Environment

• Streetscape Design

To create the desired character of the public environment, streetscape designs should reflect Northern Avenue's role as an extension of the regional Harborwalk system, as well as the hierarchy of streets and public spaces.

Northern Avenue will be treated as a maritime boulevard, with 12-18' wide sidewalks and a single row of trees on the north (water) side, and 24' wide sidewalks and double rows of trees on the south (land) side. Special paving may be used at building entrances, sidewalk cafes, crosswalks, and other appropriate locations. Trees, spaced 25' apart, will provide shade for pedestrians, while leaving a clear zone for shoppers along the building faces on the south side of the street. Planting beds should use native seaside plantings.

Secondary streets, including "Sharp," "Flat," Calvin Place Extension, B, D, and Seaport Lane, will be treated as public streets, with continuous 12-15' wide sidewalks, and single rows of trees spaced 25' apart. Viaduct Street should be treated as a public street, with a continuous sidewalk, similar in design to those throughout the quarter, extending to the building face on both sides. There should be a clearly visible and accessible pedestrian connection up to Viaduct Street from Northern Avenue. "Harmonic" Street should be treated as a 40' wide paved pedestrian way, with double rows of trees, and granite paving for service vehicles down its center.

• Mass Transit

The MBTA's transitway will be below grade where it aligns with the Northern Avenue waterfront, to avoid negative impacts on the surface environment. Current plans call for a highly visible station to be incorporated into the Massport Phase I garage at Viaduct Street. The station shall be visible along Viaduct Street above Northern Avenue, and accesible at both the Northern/Congress level, through a proposed through-block pedestrian arcade, and the Viaduct level.

STREETSCAPE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

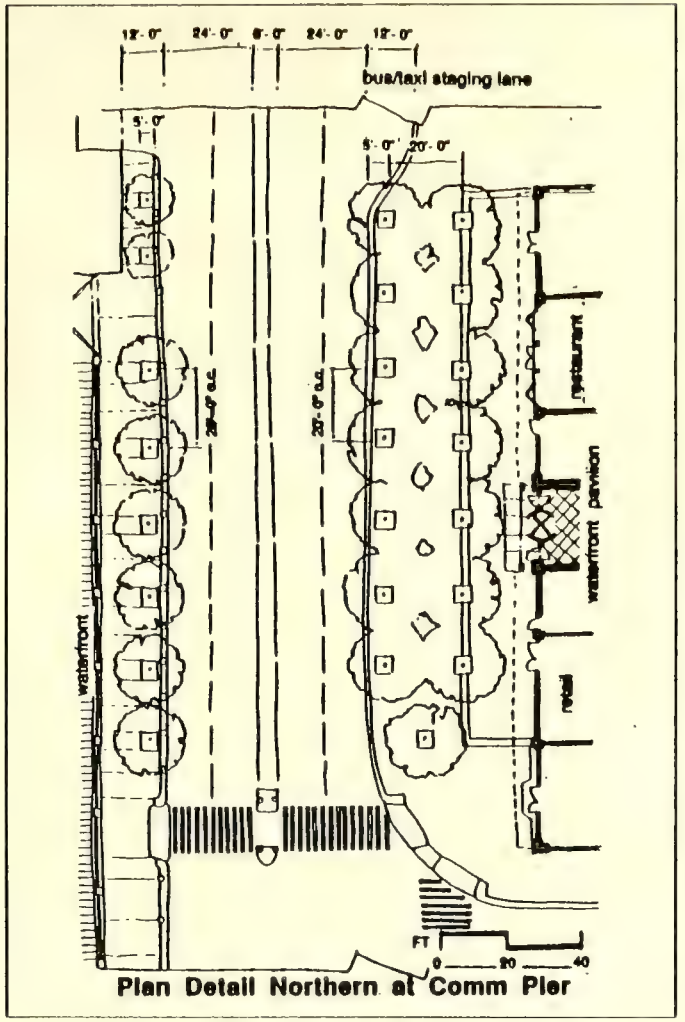
Paving and curbs: decorative paving such as brick or granite, with granite curbs.

Trees: hardy deciduous trees, such as Chinese Elm, along water's edge. Mixture of native deciduous trees, including Linden, Ash, Gingko, and London Plane, on side streets.

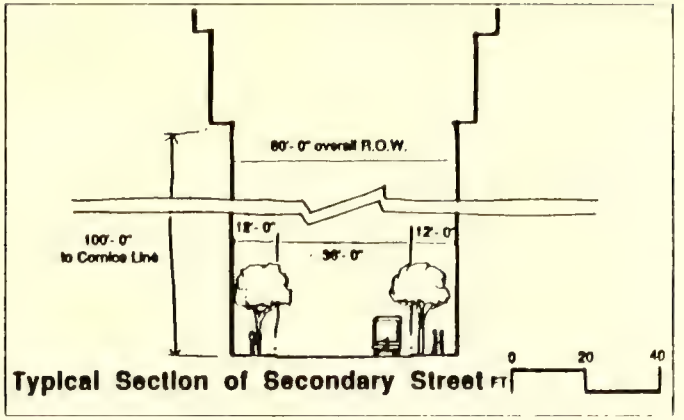
Plantings: native seaside plants such as *rosa rugosa*.

Lights: Nautical character lights on waterfront boulevard, single acorns on secondary streets.

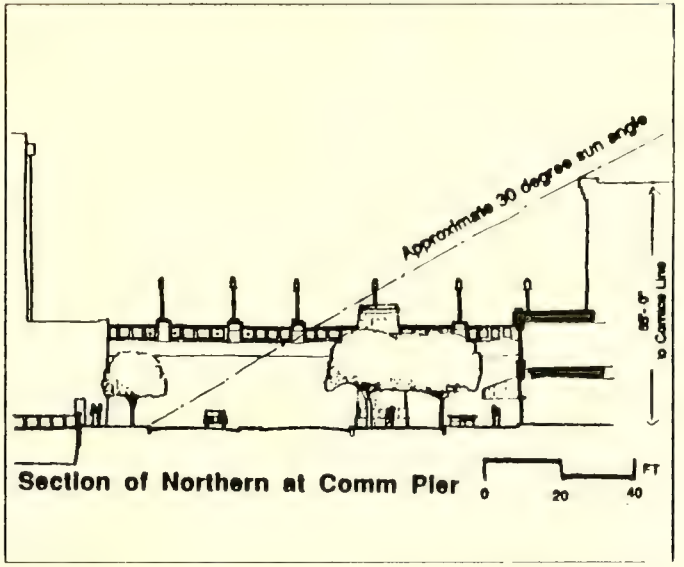
Conceptual design studies for Northern Avenue waterfront and secondary streets



Plan Detail Northern at Comm Pier

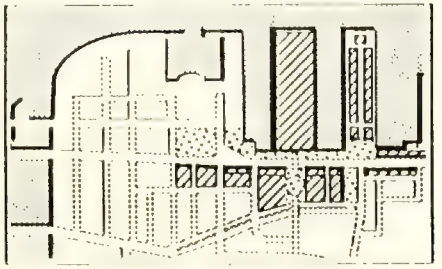


Typical Section of Secondary Street



Section of Northern at Comm Pier

Private Development



Above: locator map

• Land Use and Density

Northern Avenue, where it runs along the waterfront, will continue to retain its existing martime character. Street-level uses, including shops and restaurants, will be water-related, to complement the continued presence of the fishing industry, with its boats and its sales and storage facilities. The density and height of new development will be limited along the waterfront, to reduce development pressures on existing uses, and to preserve the pedestrian scale of the boulevard, which also serves as an extension of the regional Harborwalk system.

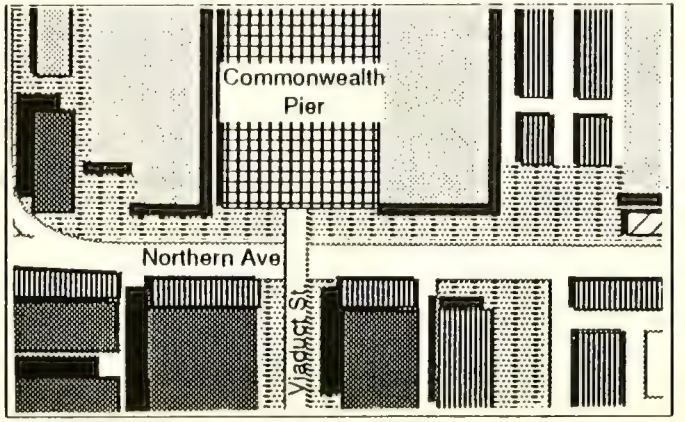
• Street-level Activities

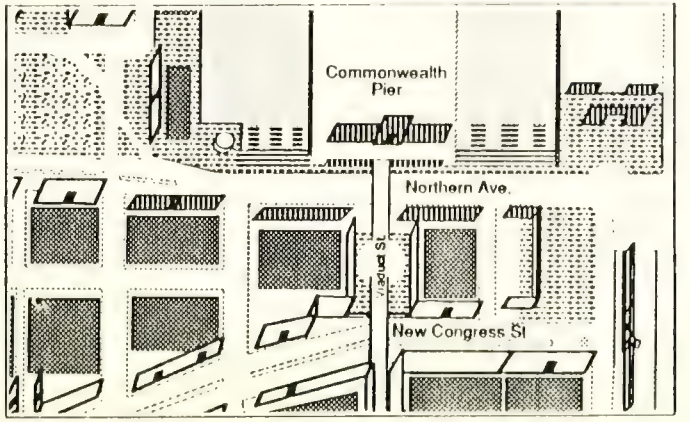
A public zone along Northern Avenue shall contain active water-related retail and restaurant uses and major building entries. An internal zone, serviced from the side streets, shall accomodate parking garage entrances and exits, loading docks, and other less active street-level uses. This internal zone will also be the appropriate location for courtyards and other semi-private open space, particularly in residential areas.

The location of parking garages shall also comply with the requirements of the Boston Transportation Department's South Boston Traffic Study. The facades of parking garages, where they border on public streets, shall comply with the guidelines for Architectural Character.

Left: Land uses
- housing
- commercial
- water-related
- exhibition

Right: Street-level activities
- active retail
- water-related
- building entrance
- internal zone





• Building Massing, Scale, and Height

Guidelines for the massing, scale, and height of private development will help preserve the existing maritime character of the public environment along the Northern Avenue waterfront, and reinforce district-wide land use and density patterns.

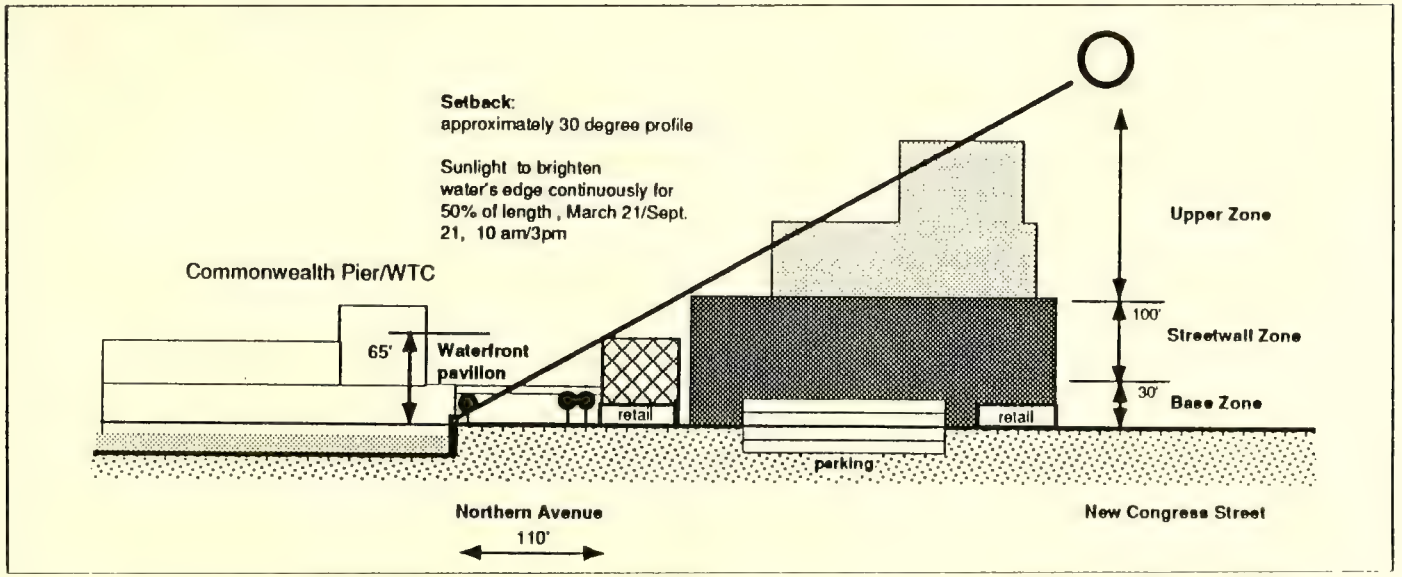
- **Waterfront scale:** buildings in a 100' deep Waterfront Zone along Northern Avenue shall preserve the existing scale of the waterfront, with a maximum height of 65'. In the Base Zone (0-30'), buildings shall hold the street line. Facades shall acccomodate active and highly visible street-level retail activities and building entrances. In the Upper Zone (30-65'), buildings may display more individuality of form and articulation. Their massing should maximize views of the water, and define a visual landward edge to Northern Avenue.

  Behind the Waterfront Zone, buildings on New Congress Street visible from Northern Avenue shall comply with guidelines for buildings along New Congress Street and New Northern Avenue. Such buildings shall not present an unbroken frontage longer than 150', to be consistent in scale with the existing character of the Boston Wharf area.

- **Sun and light:** Both as-of-right and in PDAs (where permitted), buildings shall set back to permit sun to strike the waterfront bulkhead on the north (water) side of Northern Avenue for at least 50% of its length continuously during the times of greatest pedestrian use -- between 10 AM and 3 PM (EST,) from spring to fall (March 21 to September 21).

  On side streets, buildings shall set back a minimum of 5' at 100' height. With each additional 25' of height, another 5' setback is required. For a more detailed description of setback and massing requirments for Upper Zones, see section IV.1, New Congress Street.

Setback requirements for Northern Avenue waterfront



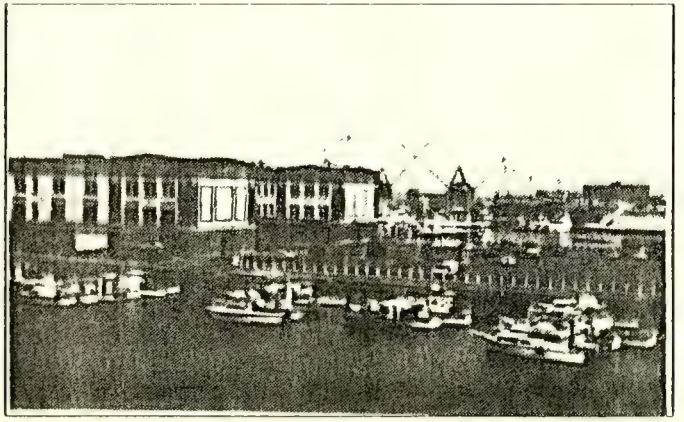
• Architectural Character

Architectural designs for new development along the Northern Avenue waterfront should reinforce its existing character as a maritime boulevard, and remain compatible in scale and articulation with existing structures along the waterfront. The guidelines are not intended to prescribe a specific "style" for Northern Avenue, or to inhibit creativity on the part of individual architects. For guidelines on buildings along New Congress Street visible from the Northern Avenue waterfront, see IV.1, New Congress Street.

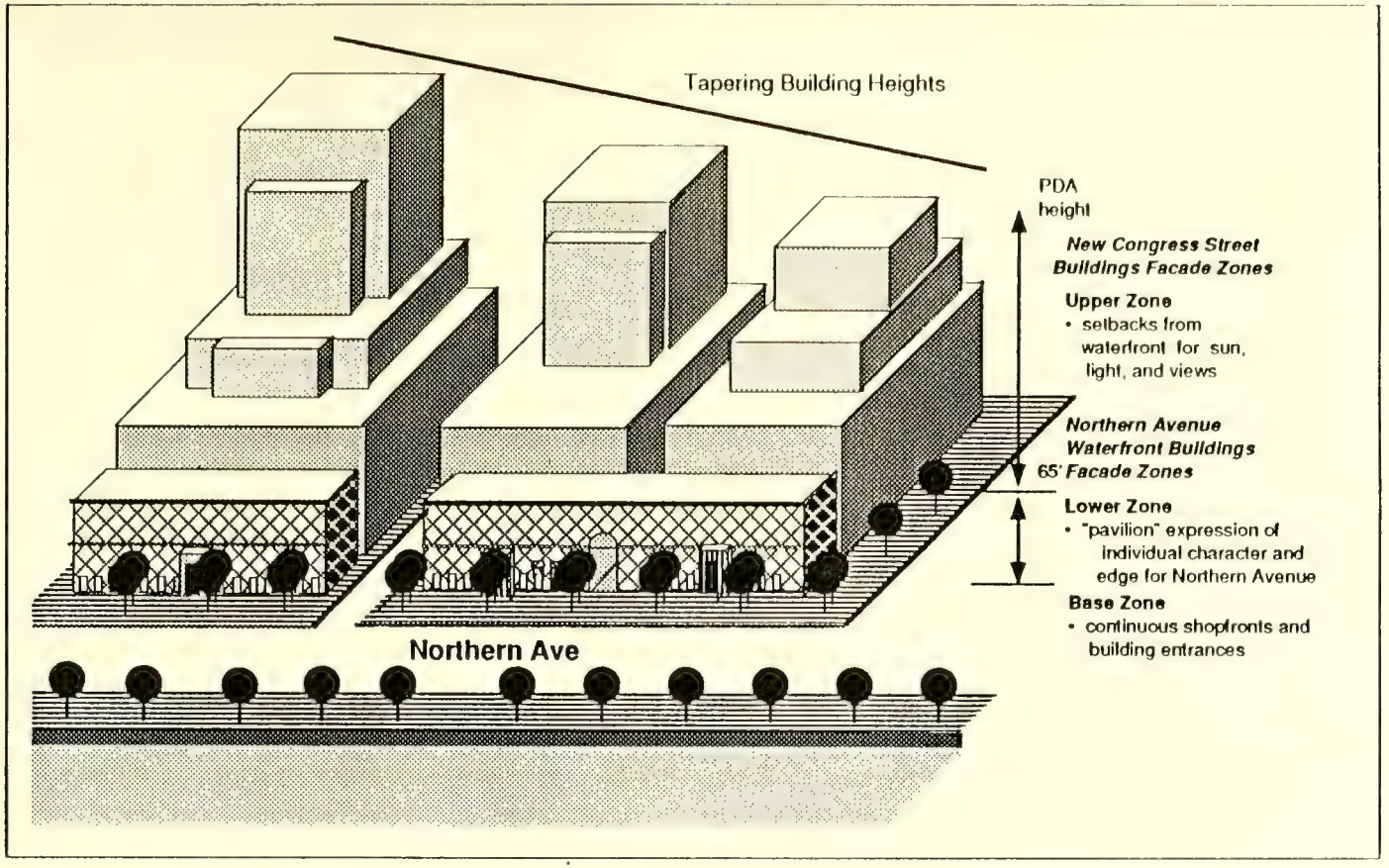
- **Waterfront Buildings:** the articulation of buildings in the 100' deep Waterfront Zone as free-standing pavilions is encouraged, as appropriate in scale and character to the pedestrian uses along the continuous Harborwalk. A greater freedom of massing and articulation shall be permitted here than elsewhere in the district, in keeping with the variety of forms and materials characteristic of the South Boston waterfront during its history. In general, a clear expression of the structural frame is encouraged. A wide variety of materials, including masonry, steel, concrete, and wood, are permitted. Reflective glass or all-glass curtain walls are not permitted.

In the **Base Zone (0-30')**, large storefront windows and door openings are encouraged, to accomodate active street-level uses. In the **Upper Zone (30-65')**, buildings may display more individuality of form and articulation, including the use of balconies, terraces, and bays offering water views. Their massing should help define a visual landward edge to Northern Avenue.

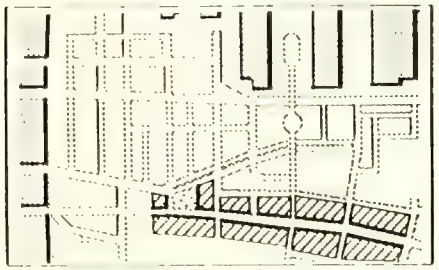
Waterfront scale of existing buildings on the Fish Pier



Guidelines for building massing, scale, and architectural character along the Northern Avenue waterfront


Tapering Building Heights
PDA height
New Congress Street Buildings Facade Zones
Upper Zone
• setbacks from waterfront for sun, light, and views
Northern Avenue Waterfront Buildings
65' Facade Zones
Lower Zone
• "pavilion" expression of individual character and edge for Northern Avenue
Base Zone
• continuous shopfronts and building entrances
Northern Ave

3. Summer Street: Urban Boulevard



Above: locator map

Raised 25' above grade since the turn-of-the-century, to bridge over the railroad tracks leading to the South Boston piers, today Summer Street remains a major vehicular and pedestrian connection from downtown to residential South Boston. New sidewalks, street trees, and lighting will enhance the street's character as a major urban boulevard, which will also act as a buffer between the denser development along the New Congress Street corridor and the less dense Industrial Study Area to the south.

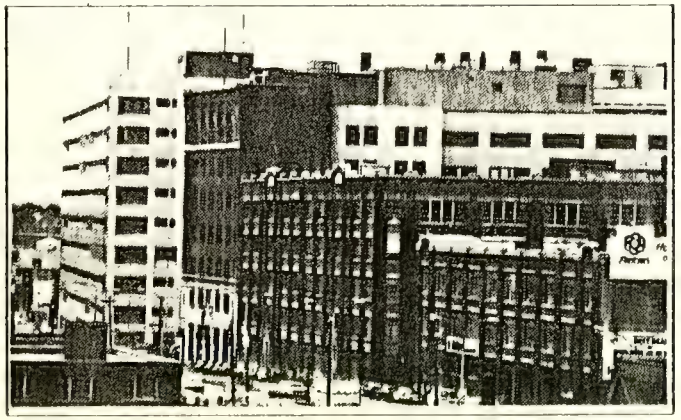
The heights and massings of new private development will extend the existing streetwall along Summer Street. Air-rights development over the Seaport Access Road will be critical to maintaining the street's urban character. North/south view corridors will preserve the spectacular views of the harbor, and align with pedestrian connections from Summer Street to the waterfront.

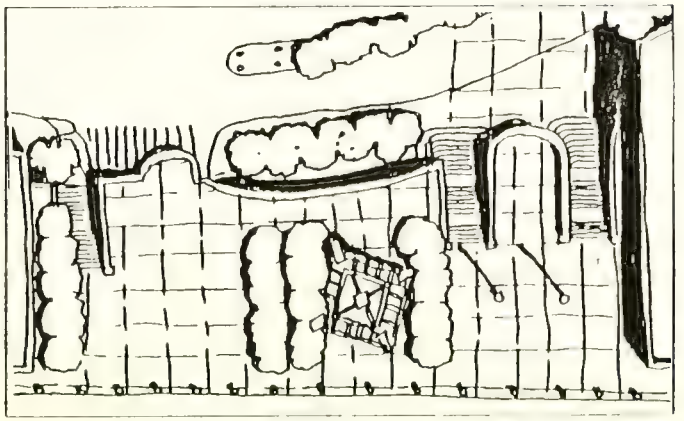
• Principal Open Spaces

Summer Street Steps: this active public space will link Summer Street to existing and New Congress Streets, and to the "Walk to the Water," a pedestrian route and view corridor north along "Harmonic" Street to Pier 4 and the waterfront. A dramatic series of terraces and steps will accommodate the 25' grade change. (See IV.1, *New Congress Street*, for full description.)

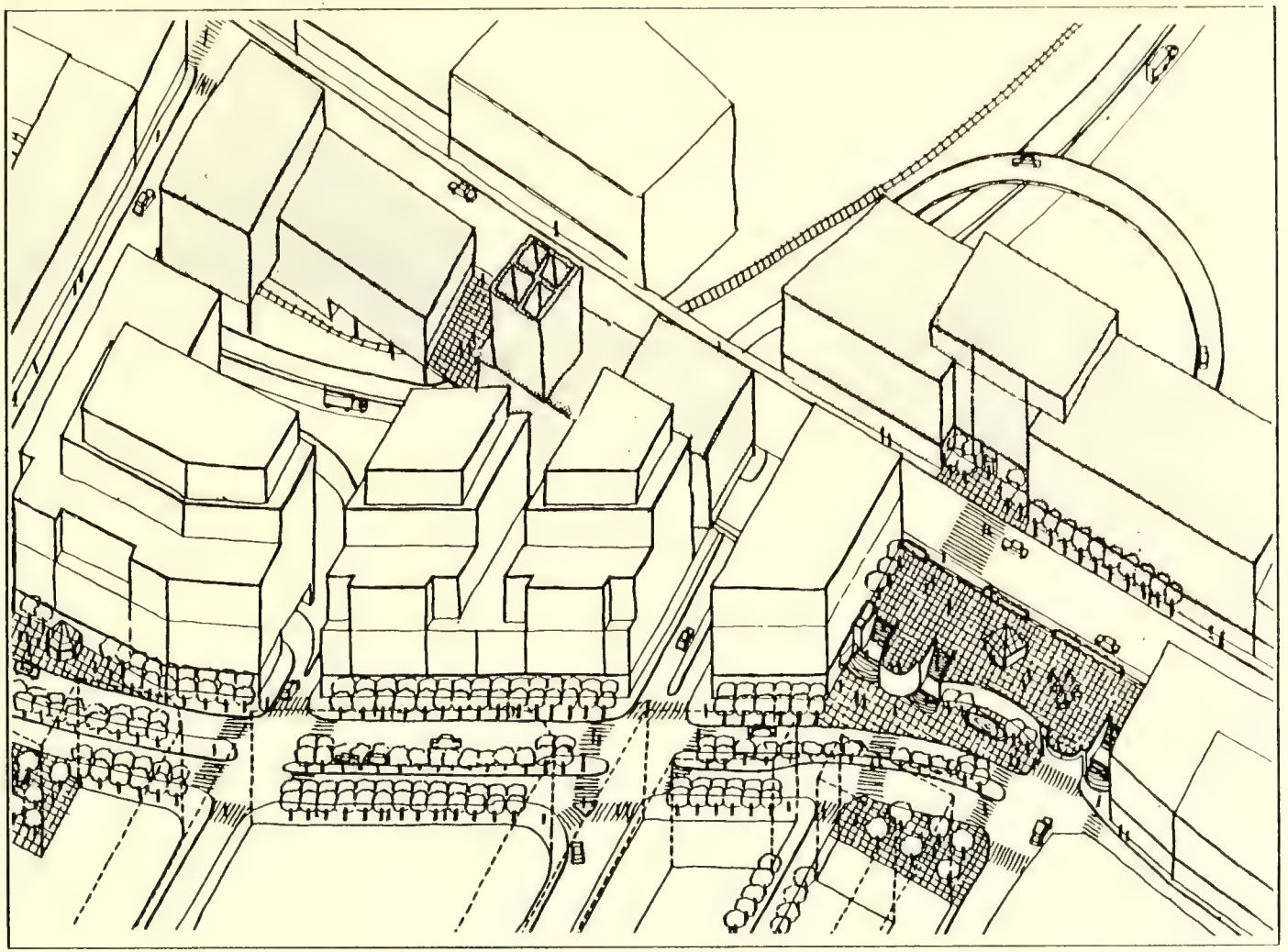
Left: view of existing industrial buildings on the south side of Summer Street today.

Right: the Summer Street Steps will connect the boulevard to New Congress Street and the "Walk to the Water"





New air-rights development (shown shaded) along Summer Street will be critical to maintaining its character as an urban boulevard



Public Environment

• Streetscape Design

To create the desired character of the public environment, streetscape designs should reflect the hierarchy of streets and public spaces.

Summer Street will be treated as an urban boulevard, with 12-15' wide sidewalks. Special paving may be used at building entrances, sidewalk cafes, and other appropriate locations. Single rows of trees, except on the viaduct portions of the boulevard, spaced 25' apart, will provide shade for pedestrians, while leaving a clear zone for shoppers along the building face. The viaduct portions of the street should also be treated as a public street, with a continuous sidewalk extending to the building face on both sides, and consistent in all respects with the rest of the boulevard.

Secondary streets, including C and D, will be treated as public streets, with continuous 12' wide sidewalks, and single rows of trees spaced 25' apart. Viaduct Street should be treated as a public street, with a continuous 12' wide sidewalk extending to the building face on both sides. The Haul Road should be treated as a truck route, with continuous 6' wide sidewalks.

• Mass Transit

The MBTA's transitway will include a station located within the Massport garage at New Congress and Viaduct Streets. The station shall be visible and accessible from Summer Street at the Viaduct Street level. There is also the possibility of an MBTA bus station located beneath the raised plaza portion of the Summer Street Steps, with excellent access to the SAR.

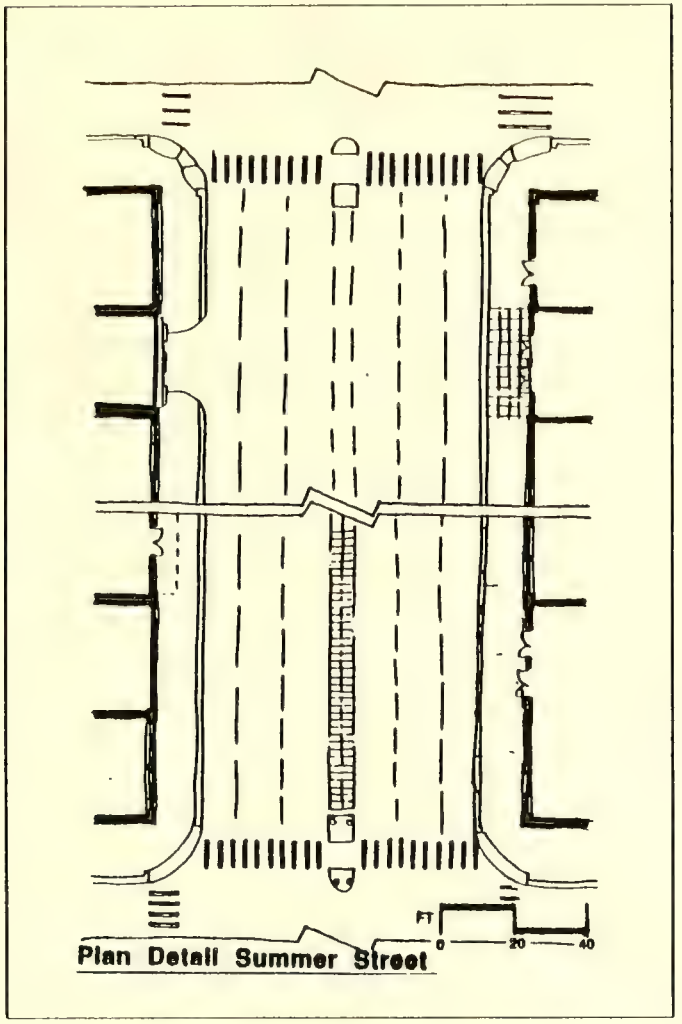
STREETSCAPE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

Paving and curbs: concrete with granite, brick, or other decorative paving, and granite curbs.

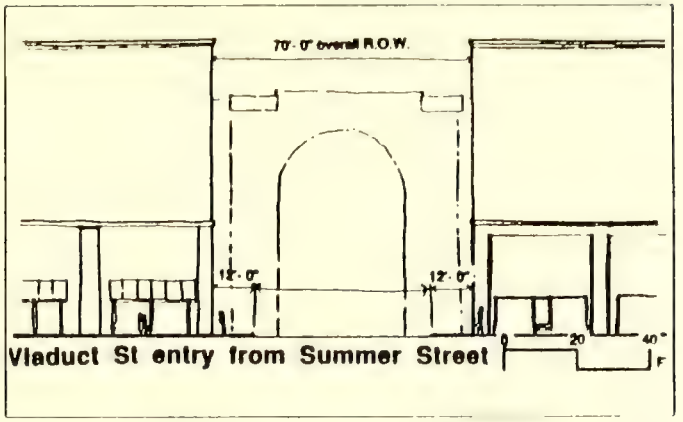
Trees: a mixture of native deciduous trees, including Linden, Gingko, Ash, and London Plane.

Lights: double acorns along boulevard, with single acorns on side streets, and quad acorns at principal public spaces.

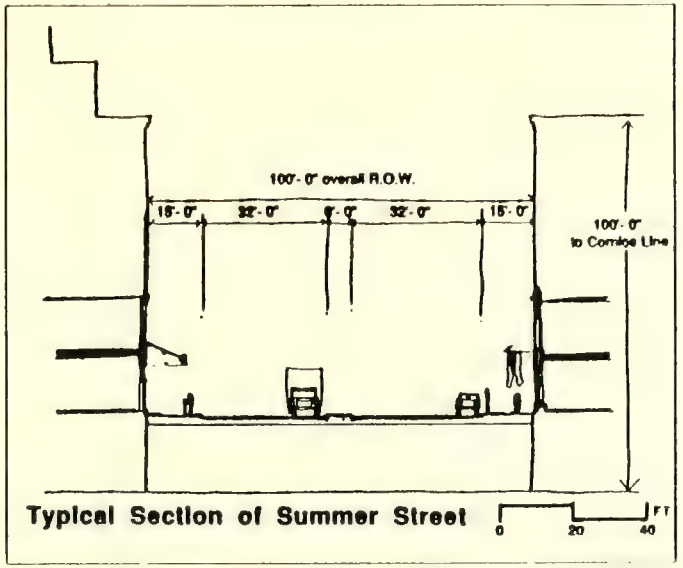
Conceptual design studies for Summer Street



Plan Detail Summer Street

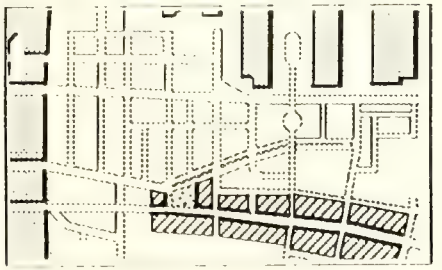


Viaduct St entry from Summer Street



Typical Section of Summer Street

Private Development



Above: locator map

• Land Use and Density

Summer Street will serve as a buffer between the more dense comercial uses along New Congress Street to the north, and the less dense industrial uses within the Industrial Study area to the south. Uses along Summer Street are anticipated to be largely research and development (R&D) and industrial, with some back office. Commercial development is anticipated around the Summer Street Steps.

• Street-level Activities

A public zone along Summer Streets shall contain major building entries, and spaces adaptable to active retail uses. An internal zone, serviced from the side streets, shall accomodate parking garage entrances and exits, loading docks, and other less active street-level uses.

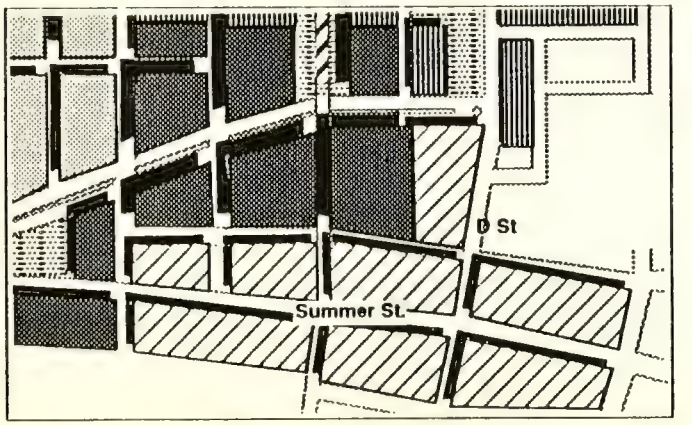
• Air-rights Development

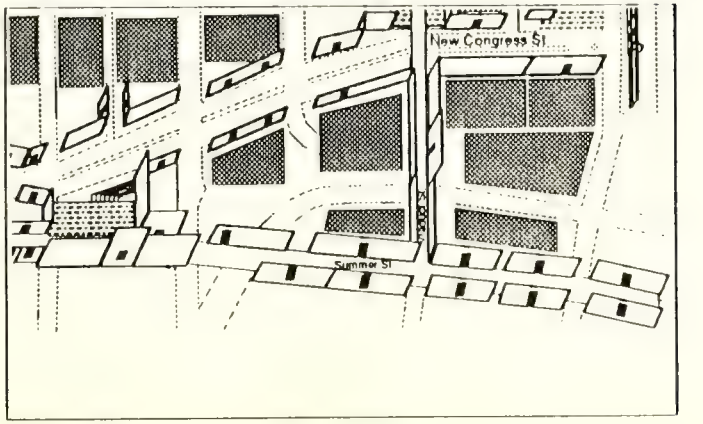
Air-rights development over the SAR and South Boston Bypass will be critical toward maintaining Summer Street's character as a major urban boulevard, with continuous streetwalls and active street-level uses. Without such development, there is the risk that the SAR and Bypass will leave an open scar throughs the district.

Much of the air-rights land is already in public hands (Massport, US Postal Service), and discussions are under way with the Commonwealth to integrate foundations for those developments with the highway design. But in the case of other parcels which may also wind up under public control, it is imperative for public agencies to work together to enable future air-rights development, since such parcels might produce substantial public benefits, similar to those produced by Parcel 18 and other develop-

Left: Land uses
- housing
- commercial
- R&D/industrial
- Air-rights

Right: Street-level activities
- active retail
- potential retail
- building entrance
- internal zone





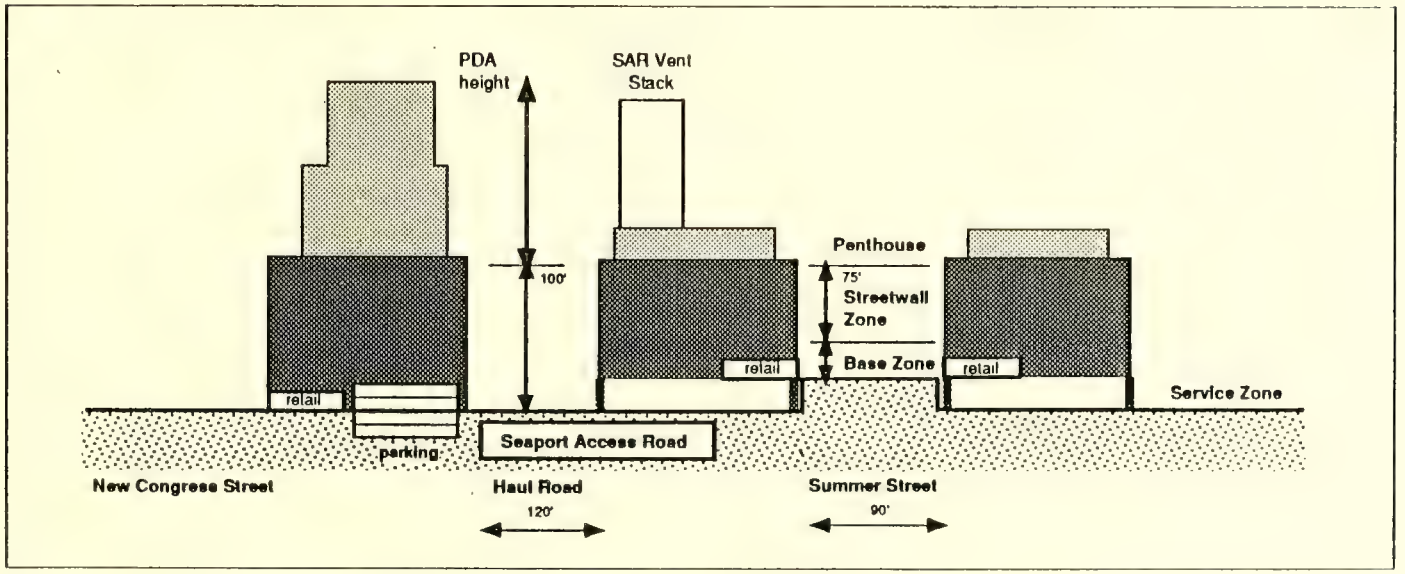
• Building Massing, Scale, and Height

Guidelines for the massing, scale, and height of private development will help establish the desired character of the public environment along Summer Street, maintain continuity with the existing scale of the Boston Wharf area, and reinforce district-wide land use and density patterns. (Note: all heights are measured from Summer Street level, which averages 25' above New Congress Street level.)

- **Streetwalls:** in the Base Zone (0-30') and the Streetwall Zone (30'-75'), buildings shall hold the street line. Parcels on Summer Street shall not present an unbroken streetwall frontage longer than 150', to be consistent in scale with the existing character of Summ60er Street.

- **Sun and light:** above 75', penthouses are permitted to a height of 125' (155' with design review), set back from the street to ensure sun and light on public streetscapes, and to avoid visually overpowering the adjacent Boston Wharf area and the Industrial Study Area. Such penthouses shall set back a minimum of 5' at 75' height. With each additional 25' of height, another 5' setback is required. Such setback requirements also apply to the vent stack required for the SAR.

Setback requirements for Summer Street



• Architectural Character

Architectural designs for new development along Sumer Street should reinforce its character as a major urban boulevard, while remaining compatible in scale and articulation with the existing fabric of the Boston Wharf area. The guidelines are not intended to prescribe a specific "style" for Summer Street, or to inhibit creativity on the part of individual architects.

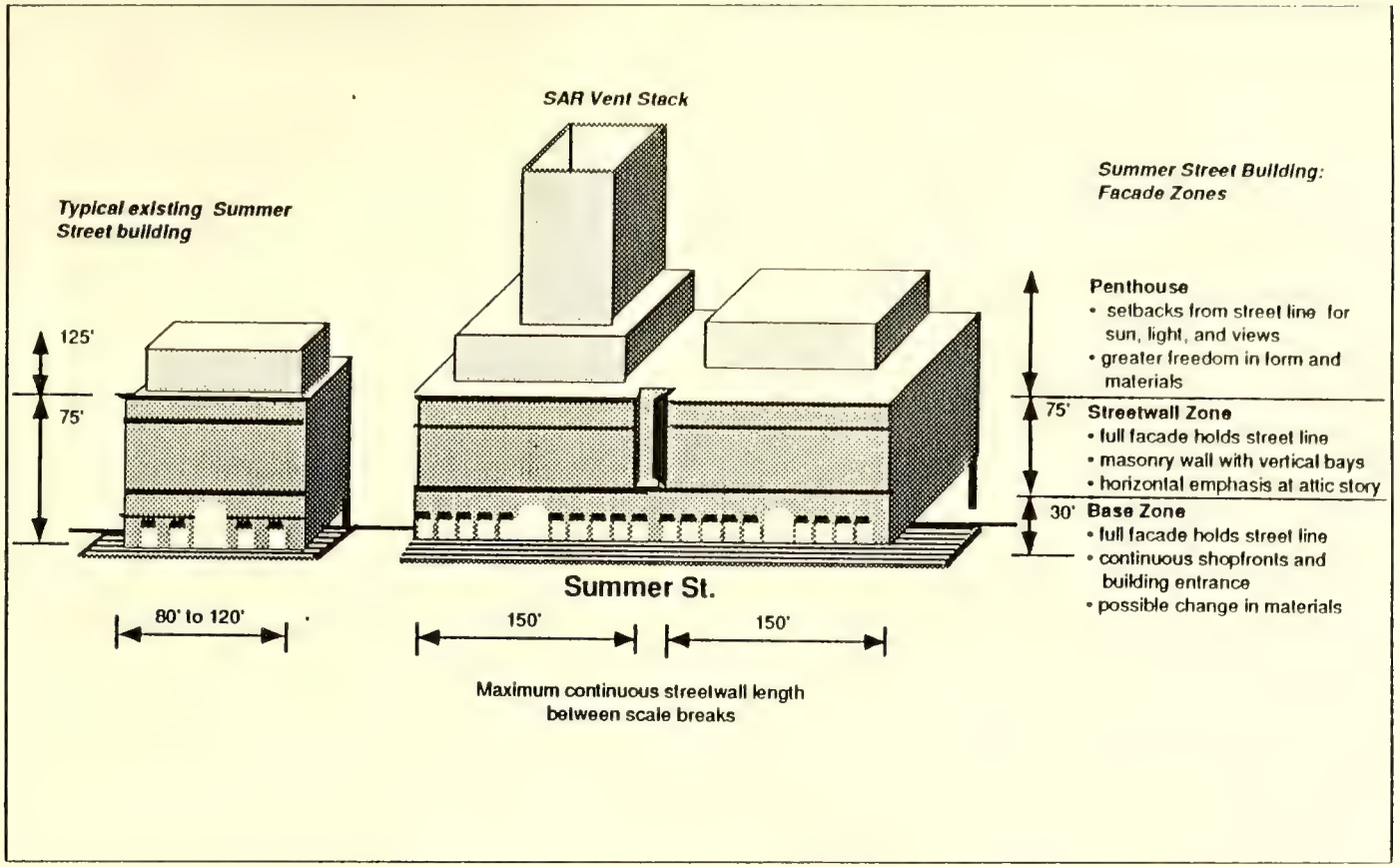
Streetwall Zone (30-75'): facades should be predominantly masonry, with vertically proportioned window openings set back from the wall plane. The structural bays should be emphasized by vertical elements. There should be a horizontal emphasis at the transition from the Base to Streetwall Zones, and at the top (attic) story, consistent with the existing cornice lines of existing buildings along Sumer Street. A distinction between the main boulevard facade and secondary side street facades is permitted through changes in materials and articulation.

Base Zone (0-30'): a change in materials, such as stone or metal, is permitted. Large storefront windows and door openings are encouraged, to accomodate active street-level uses.

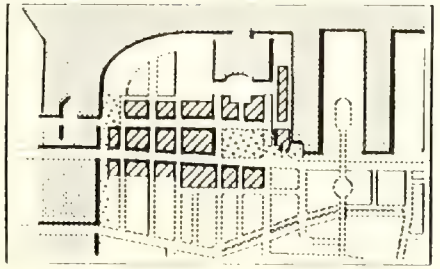
Penthouses and SAR Vent Stack: where permitted as-of-right or under design review, penthouses should set back in gradual increments, both horizontally and vertically. A change in materials and larger areas of glazing are permitted, but penthouses and other mechanical enclosures, including the SAR vent stack, should continue to show a clear articulation of the structural frame, emphasizing the vertical proportion of bays and window openings. Reflective glass, or all-glass curtain walls, will not be permitted.

Existing buildings along Summer Street

Guidelines for building massing, scale, and architectural character along Summer Street



4. New Northern and Northern Avenues: Urban Boulevards



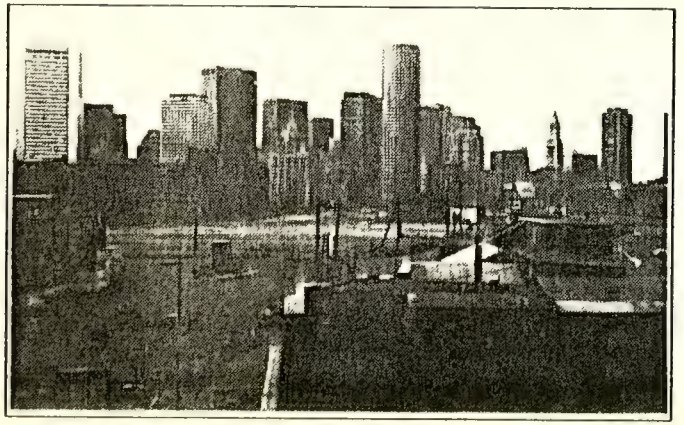
Above: locator map

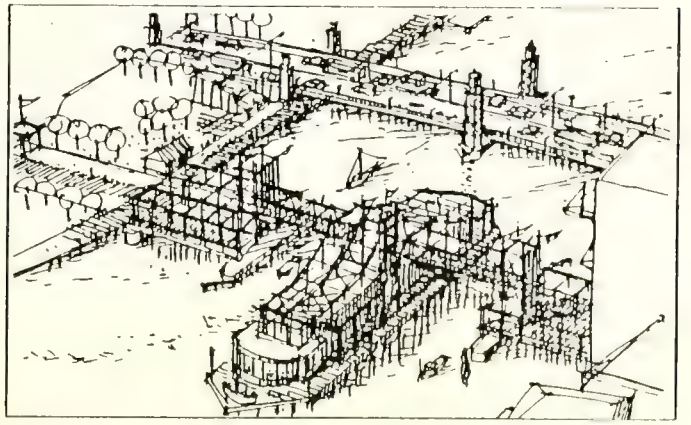
Today an expanse of commuter parking lots, New Northern and Northern Avenues will become a focus of development density and activities. New Northern Avenue will serve as a major gateway to the district from downtown, and will define the transition between the Boston Wharf and Fan Pier/Pier 4 quarters. Existing Northern Avenue will provide a vital link in the district's open space system, connecting the maritime activities in Lobster Park on the Fort Point Channel waterfront with the Fan Pier/Pier 4 Waterplaza, and with Mariners' Park, a green oasis in the midst of denser commercial development. Broad sidewalks lined by trees and fronted by continuous active street-level uses will contribute to the vital, mixed-use character of these urban boulevards.

The heights and massings of new development will create a continuous streetwall along New Northern and Northern Avenues, compatible in scale and character with the existing Boston Wharf buildings. Taller buildings, where permitted under Planned Development Area (PDA) regulations, will be set back and modulated to ensure sun on public streets and open spaces.

Left: future alignment for New Northern Avenue, showing its current use for parking.

Right: the existing and New Northern Avenue bridges will serve as gateways from downtown into the district (Todd Lee/Clark/Rozas)





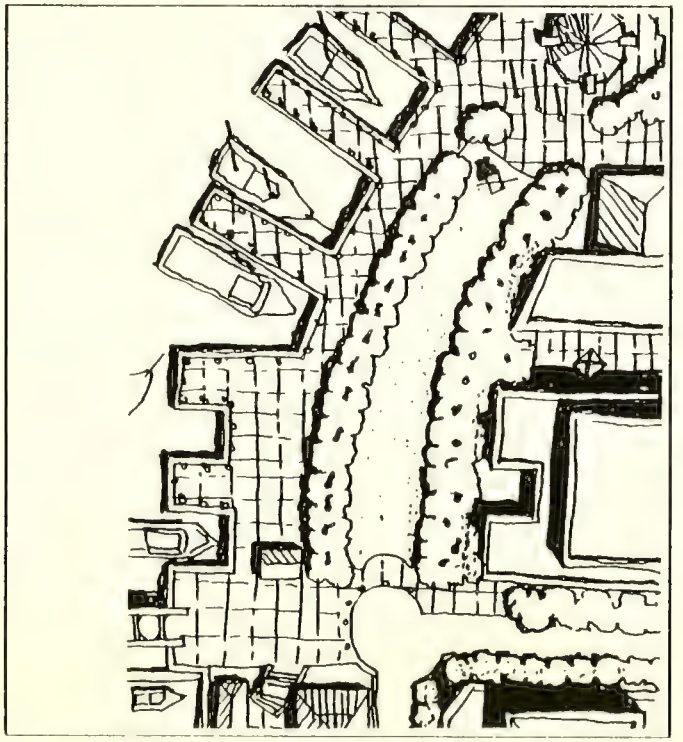
View of Lobster Park, public open space along Fort Point Channel, from New Northern Avenue bridge(sketch by Todd Lee in progress)

Public Environment

• Principal Open Spaces

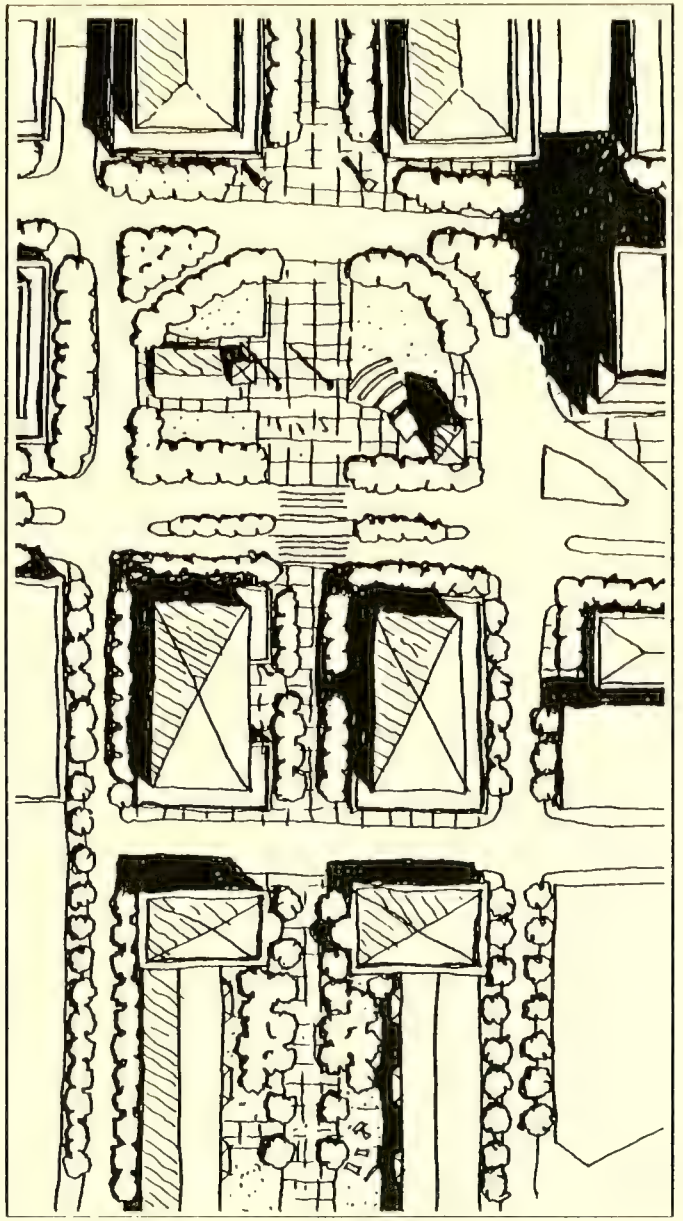
Three key public open spaces will punctuate the length of New Northern and Northern Avenues. Lobster Park will serve as an extension of the already-popular Museum Wharf, at a point adjacent to downtown. The Waterplaza will bring together comercial, residential, and water-related uses, surrounding an extensive new marina. Mariners' Park will connect the denser commercial development along New Northern and Northern Avenues to the maritime character of existing Northern Avenue where it serves as an extension of the Harborwalk.

Lobster Park



This active public space will serve as an extension of the already-popular Museum Wharf. A direct pedestrian connection across the existing Northern Avenue Bridge (to be converted to recreational use) will link the park to downtown. Such uses as water-related restaurants, shops, and exhibitions, boat slips, and a ferry terminal, as well as the superb views of downtown across the mouth of the Fort Point Channel, will all contribute to the park's role as a city-wide gathering place.

Mariners' Park and "Walk to the Water"



Mariners' Park will play a key role in linking together different pedestrian routes through the district. The park is located at the junction of the waterfront with New Northern Avenue, with its denser commercial development, to the west, and existing Northern Avenue, with its maritime character, to the east. Extensive trees, lawns, and plantings will create a green oasis within one of the densest parts of the district. The potential relocation of the Church of Our Lady of Good Voyages to the park would provide a link with the district's seafaring past.

The park also stands on the "Walk to the Water," the north-south pedestrian route along "Harmonic" Street. A 40' wide tree-lined pedestrian way will provide views and access from the Summer Street Steps and New Congress Street all the way to the Pier 4 Waterplaza at the waterfront.

• Streetscape Design

To create the desired character of the public environment, streetscape designs should reflect the hierarchy of streets and public spaces.

New Northern Avenue will be treated as a gracious urban boulevard, with 16' wide sidewalks. Special paving may be used at building entrances, sidewalk cafes, and other appropriate locations. Single rows of trees, spaced 25' apart, will provide shade for pedestrians, while leaving a clear zone for shoppers along the building face. A 16' wide central island (narrowing down to 6' at turning lanes where required) with a single row of trees spaced 25' apart, will reinforce the desired boulevard quality of New Northern Avenue. The island will use native plantings in continuous planting beds, with special paving at crosswalks.

Existing Northern Avenue will be treated as a major east-west pedestrian connection, with 24' wide sidewalks with double rows of trees on the north side, and 16' wide sidewalks and a single row of trees on the south side. Paving and plantings should be similar in character to New Northern Avenue. Secondary streets, including Sleeper, Farnsworth, Pittsburgh, "Sharp," and "Flat," will be treated as public streets, with continuous 12-15' wide sidewalks, and single rows of trees spaced 25' apart. "Harmonic" Street should be treated as a 40' wide pedestrian way, with double rows of trees, and granite paving in the center for service vehicles.

• Mass Transit

The MBTA's Transitway will be below grade along New Northern Avenue, to avoid negative impacts on the surface environment. Current plans call for a highly visible station to be located at the midpoint of New Northern Avenue. Its location and design shall be coordinated with street-level activities along New Northern Avenue, with a west entrance located as close to Museum Wharf as possible, and an east entrance located as close to Mariners' Park as possible.

STREETSCAPE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

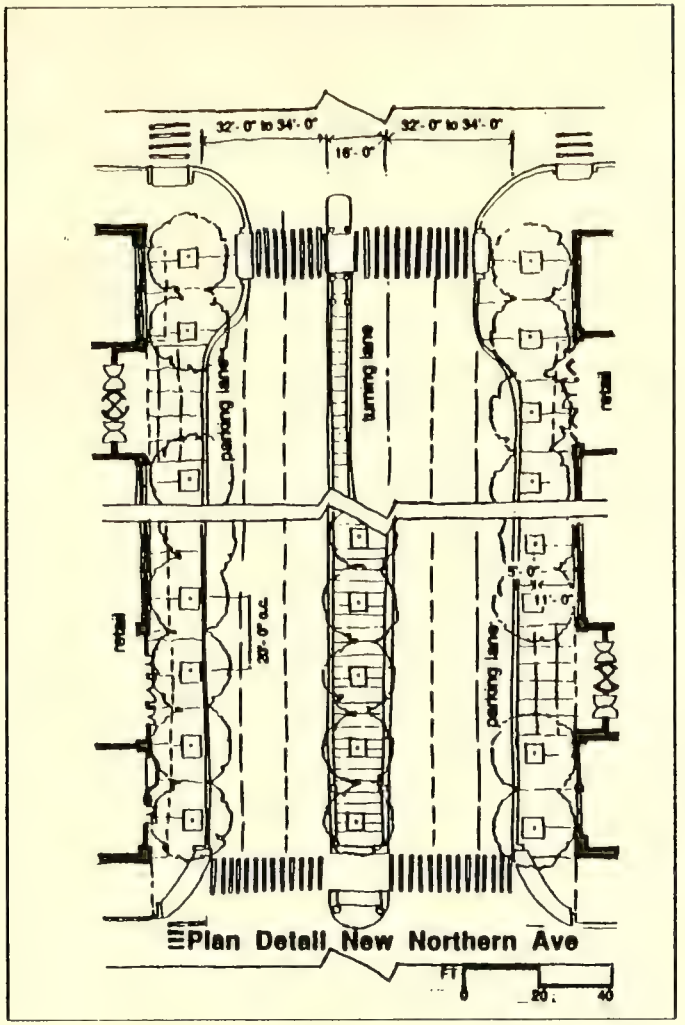
Paving and curbs: decorative paving such as brick or granite, with granite curbs.

Trees: a mixture of large native deciduous trees, including Sweetgum, Red Oak, and London Plane, with flowering trees such as Horse Chestnut in center islands.

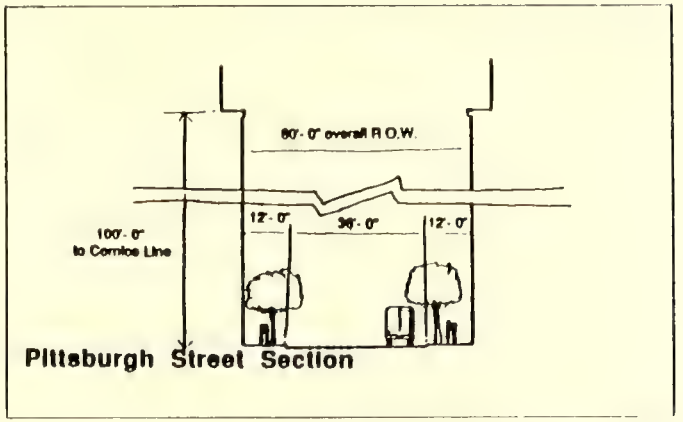
Plantings: native seaside plants such as *rosa rugosa.*

Lights: double acorns on avenues, with single acorns on secondary streets, and quad acorns at principal public spaces.

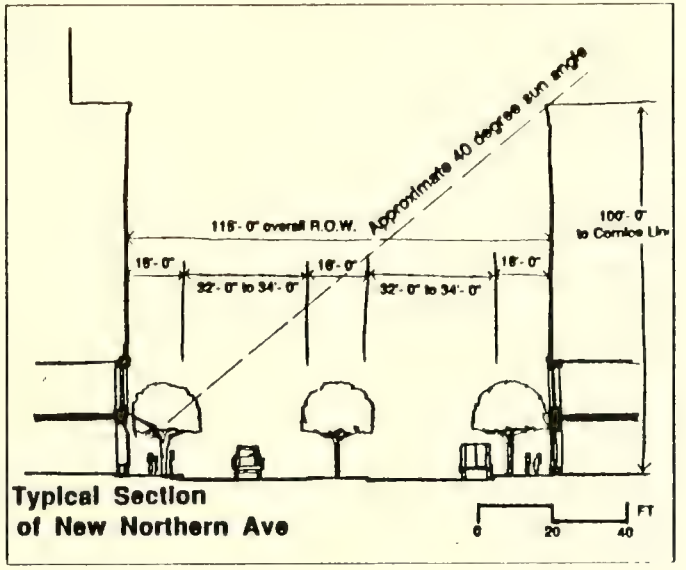
Conceptual design studies for New Northern Avenue



Plan Detail New Northern Ave

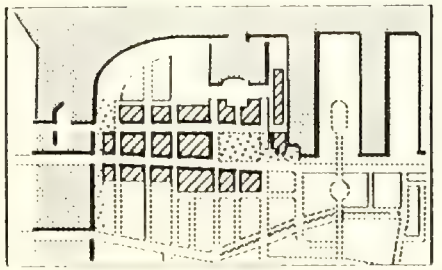


Pittsburgh Street Section



Typical Section of New Northern Ave

Private Development



Above: locator map

• Land Use and Density

New Northen and existing Northern Avenues will serve as the focus for higher density uses within the Fan Pier/ Pier 4 quarter of the district, to reduce development pressures on sensitive adjoining areas -- Fort Point Channel, the waterfront Harborwalk, and the edge of the historic Boston Whaf area. Uses along New Northern and existing Northern Avenues are anticipated to be primarily commercial, but with the possibility of other uses, including hotel, R&D, and residential (between "Sharp" and "Flat" Streets).

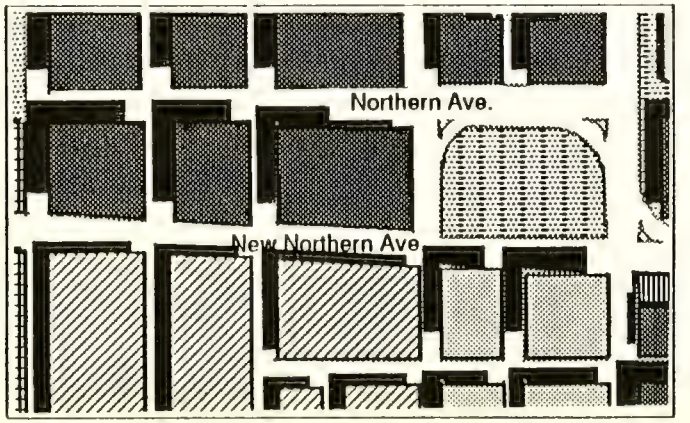
• Street-level Activities

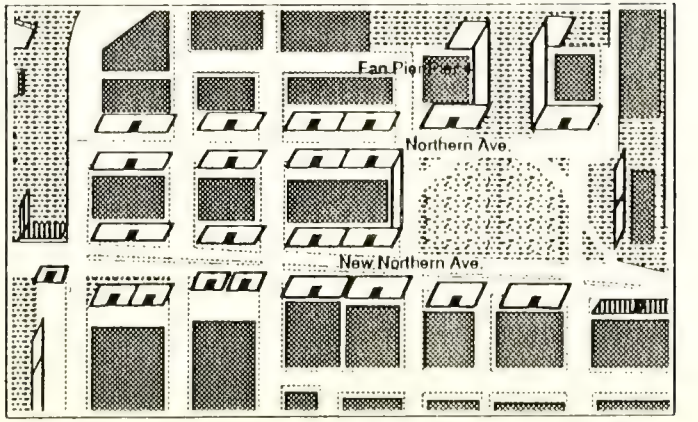
A public zone along New Northern Avenue shall contain active retail uses and major building entries. An internal zone, serviced from the side streets, shall accomodate parking garage entrances and exits, loading docks, and other less active street-level uses. This internal zone will also be the appropriate location for courtyards and other semi-private open space, particularly in residential areas.

The location of parking garages shall also comply with the requirements of the Boston Transportation Department's South Boston Traffic Study. The facades of parking garages, where they border on public streets, shall comply with the guidelines for Architectural Character.

Left: Land uses
- housing
- commercial
- water-related
- Boston Wharf

Right: Street-level activities
- active retail
- water-related
- building entrance
- internal zone





• Building Massing, Scale, and Height

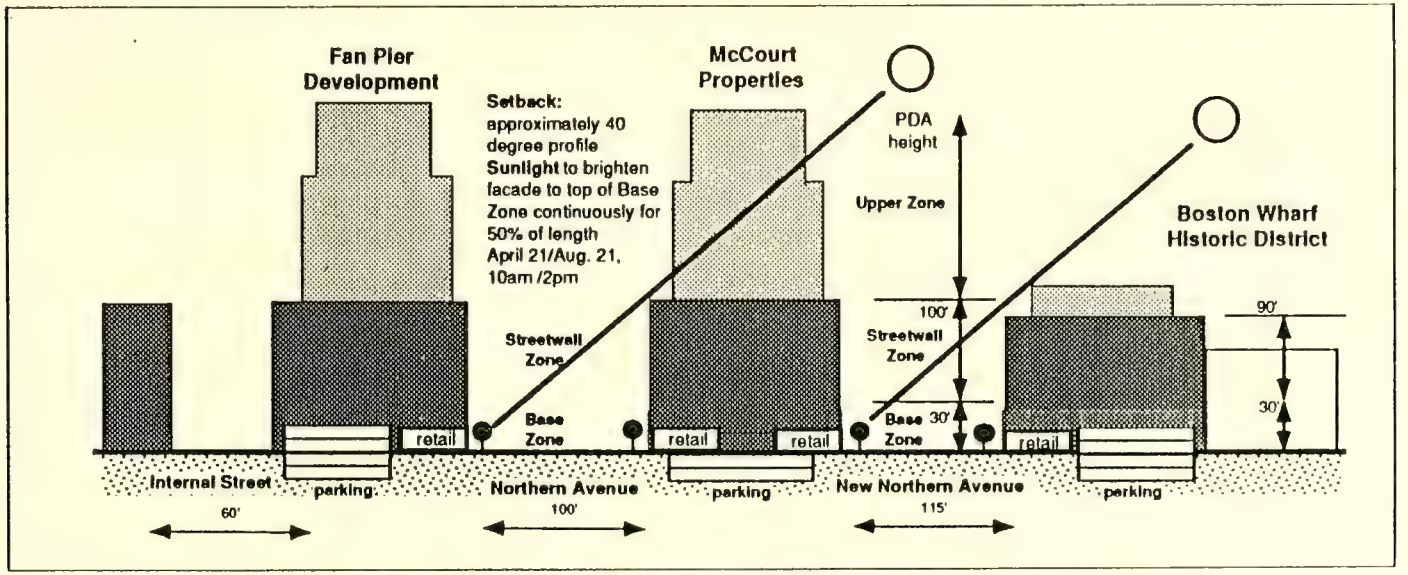
Guidelines for the massing, scale, and height of private development will help establish the desired character of the public environment along New Northern and existing Northern Avenues, maintain continuity with the existing scale of the Boston Wharf area, and reinforce district-wide land use and density patterns.

- **Streetwalls:** in the Base Zone (0-30') and the Streetwall Zone (30'-100'), buildings shall hold the street line. Parcels on New Northern and existing Northern Avenues shall not present an unbroken streetwall frontage longer than 150', to be consistent in scale with the existing character of the Boston Wharf area.

- **Sun and light:** where greater height is permitted for buildings within a PDA, above 100' buildings shall set back from the street to ensure sun and light on public streetscapes, and to avoid visually overpowering the adjacent Boston Wharf area. On the north side of New Northern Avenue and on secondary streets, buildings shall set back a minimum of 5' at 100' height. With each additional 25' of height, another 5' setback is required. Buildings on the north side of New Northern Avenue must also set back to permit sun to strike the facade of buildings on the north side of existing Northern Avenue down to the top of the Base Zone for at least 50% of their length continuously during the times of greatest pedestrian use -- between 10 AM and 2 PM (EST), from late spring to late summer (April 21 to August 21).

For setback requirements on new infill construction within the Boston Wharf area on the south side of New Northern Avenue, see IV.6, *Boston Wharf*.

Setback requirements for New Northern and Northern Avenues



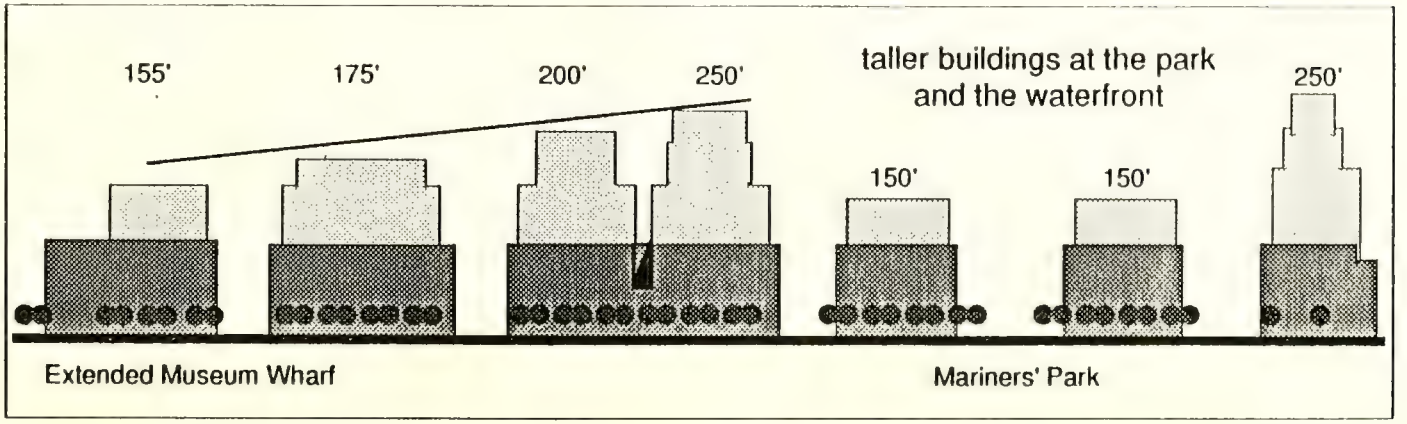
• Heights

Upper Zones of buildings up to 125' high should be set back from the street and treated in a manner similar to existing penthouses within the Boston Wharf area.

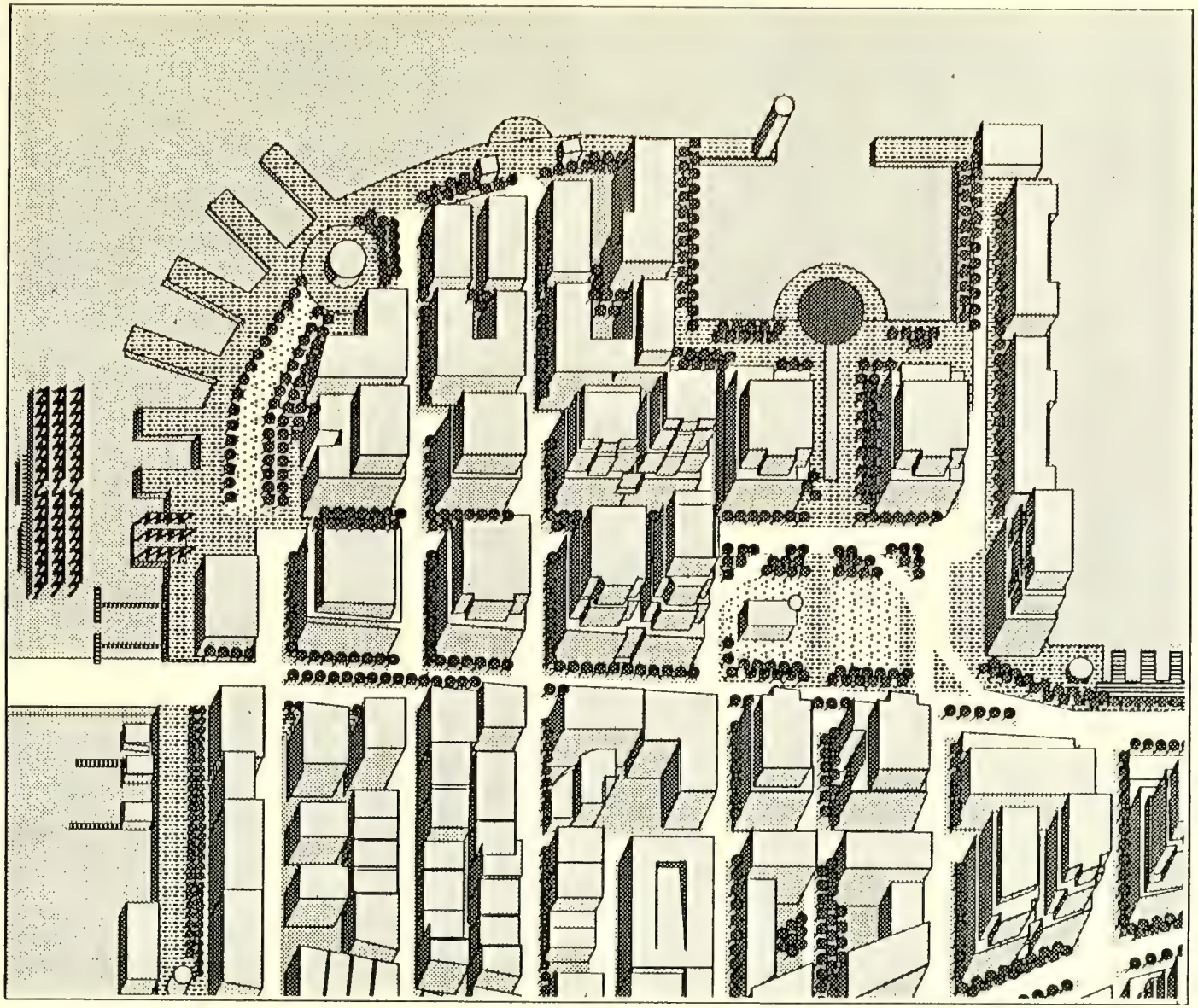
Upper Zones of buildings over 125' high should taper upwards from 125' adjoining Fort Point Channel, to a maximum of 250' fronting on Mariners' Park. Front faces of Upper Zones should be parallel to New Northern and existing Northern Avenues to a height of at least 200'. Faces of Upper Zones visible from public streets and open spaces, even where not subject to other setback requirements, should display vertical and horizontal articulation.

Where a block is large enough to require a Streetwall break (over 150' frontage along New Northern or existing Northern Avenues) the massing of Upper Zones should reflect the articulation of Streetwall masses -- where the streetwall is broken into two distinct masses, for example, the Upper Zones should also be broken into two distinct masses. Such separate Upper Zones should be spaced at least 30' apart. Their height should vary according to the tapering of heights along New Northern Avenue described above. The heights of separate Upper Zones within a single block should vary by at least 50'.

Tapering of building heights along New Northern Avenue



Illustrative view of building massings along New Northern and Northern Avenues



• Architectural Character

Architectural designs for new development along New Northern Avenue should reinforce its character as a major urban boulevard, while remaining compatible in scale and articulation with the existing fabric of the Boston Wharf area. The guidelines are not intended to prescribe a specific "style" for New Northern Avenue, or to inhibit creativity on the part of individual architects.

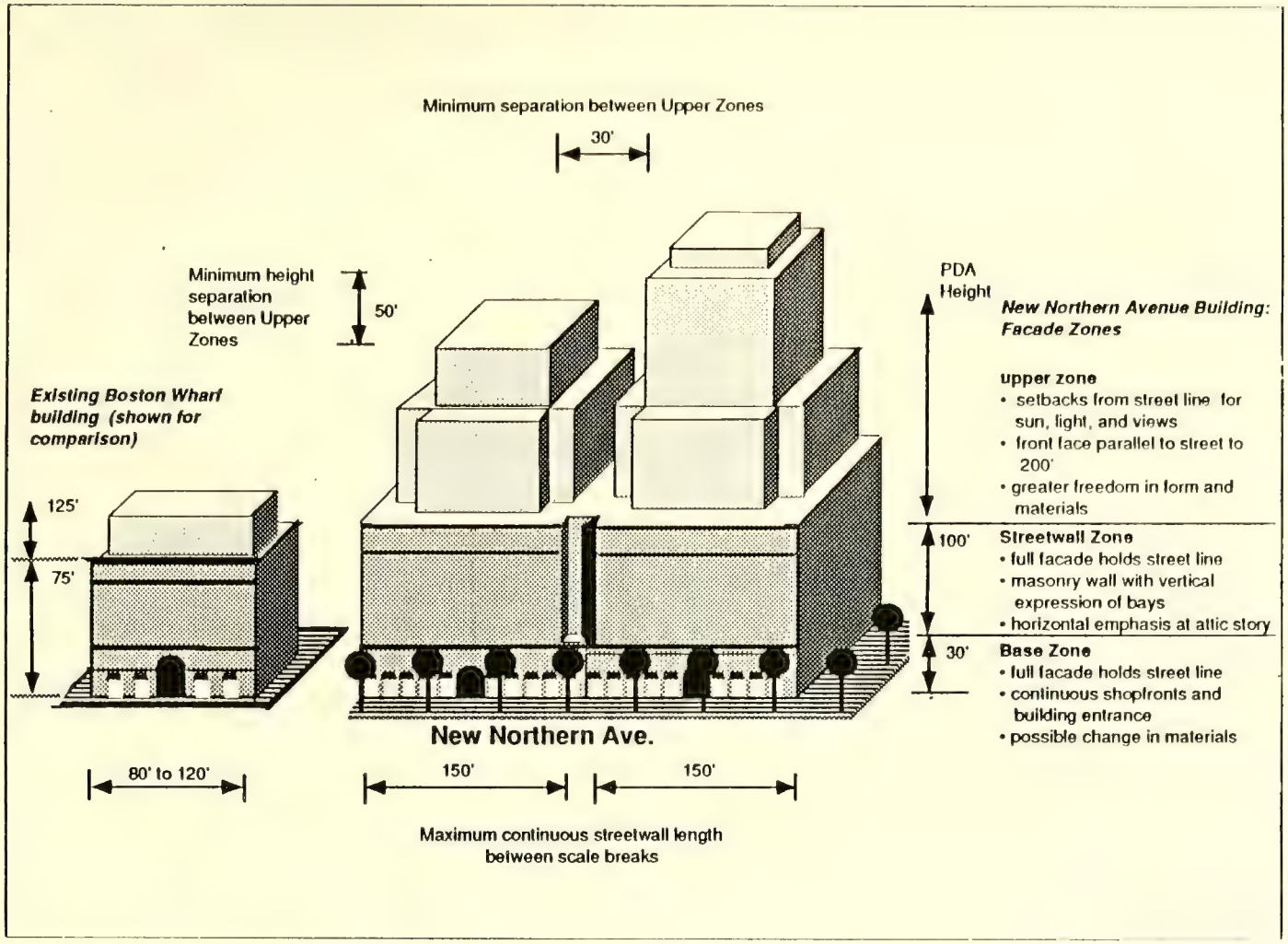
Streetwall Zone (30-100'): facades should be predominantly masonry, with vertically proportioned window openings set back from the wall plane. The structural bays should be emphasized by vertical elements. There should be a horizontal emphasis at the transition from the Base to Streetwall Zones, and at the top (attic) story, consistent with the existing cornice lines of existing buildings within the Boston Wharf area. A distinction between the main boulevard facade and secondary side street facades is permitted through changes in materials and articulation.

Base Zone (0-30'): a change in materials, such as stone or metal, is permitted. Large storefront windows and door openings are encouraged, to accomodate active street-level uses.

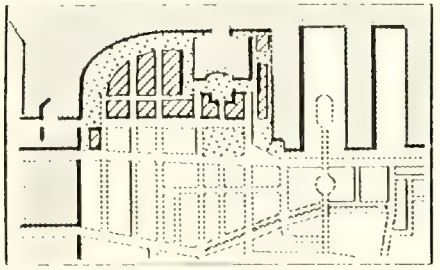
Upper Zones: where greater height is permitted within PDAs, buildings should set back in gradual increments, both horizontally and vertically. A change in materials and larger areas of glazing are permitted, but buildings should continue to show a clear articulation of the structural frame, emphasizing the vertical proportion of bays and window openings. Reflective glass, or all-glass curtain walls, will not be permitted.

Existing building within Boston Wharf area bordering future alignment of New Northern Avenue

Guidelines for building massing, scale, and architectural character along New Northern Avenue


Minimum separation between Upper Zones
30'
Minimum height separation between Upper Zones
50'
PDA Height
New Northern Avenue Building: Facade Zones
upper zone
• setbacks from street line for sun, light, and views
• front face parallel to street to 200'
• greater freedom in form and materials
100'
Streetwall Zone
• full facade holds street line
• masonry wall with vertical expression of bays
• horizontal emphasis at attic story
30'
Base Zone
• full facade holds street line
• continuous shopfronts and building entrance
• possible change in materials
Existing Boston Wharf building (shown for comparison)
125'
75'
New Northern Ave.
80' to 120'
150'
150'
Maximum continuous streetwall length between scale breaks

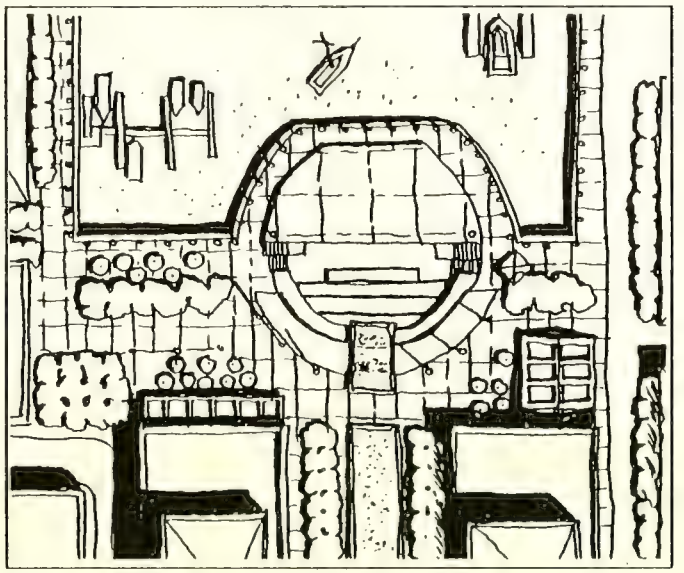
5. Fan Pier/Pier 4: Public Waterfront



Above: locator map

Taking advantage of its spectacular location and views, directly across Fort Point Channel from downtown, the Fan Pier /Pier 4 quarter will be organized around a generous waterfront park, which will serve as an extension of the regional Harborwalk system, and provide a variety of active and passive recreational uses. The principal public spaces, Lobster Park, the Waterplaza, and Mariners' Park, will be enlivened by active water-related uses, to enhance the lively maritime character of the quarter.

Building heights and massings will preserve a pedestrian scale along the waterfront, and ensure maximum sun on public open spaces. Taller buildings, where permitted in adjacent areas under Planned Development Area (PDA) regulations, will be set back and modulated to ensure sun on the public waterfront.

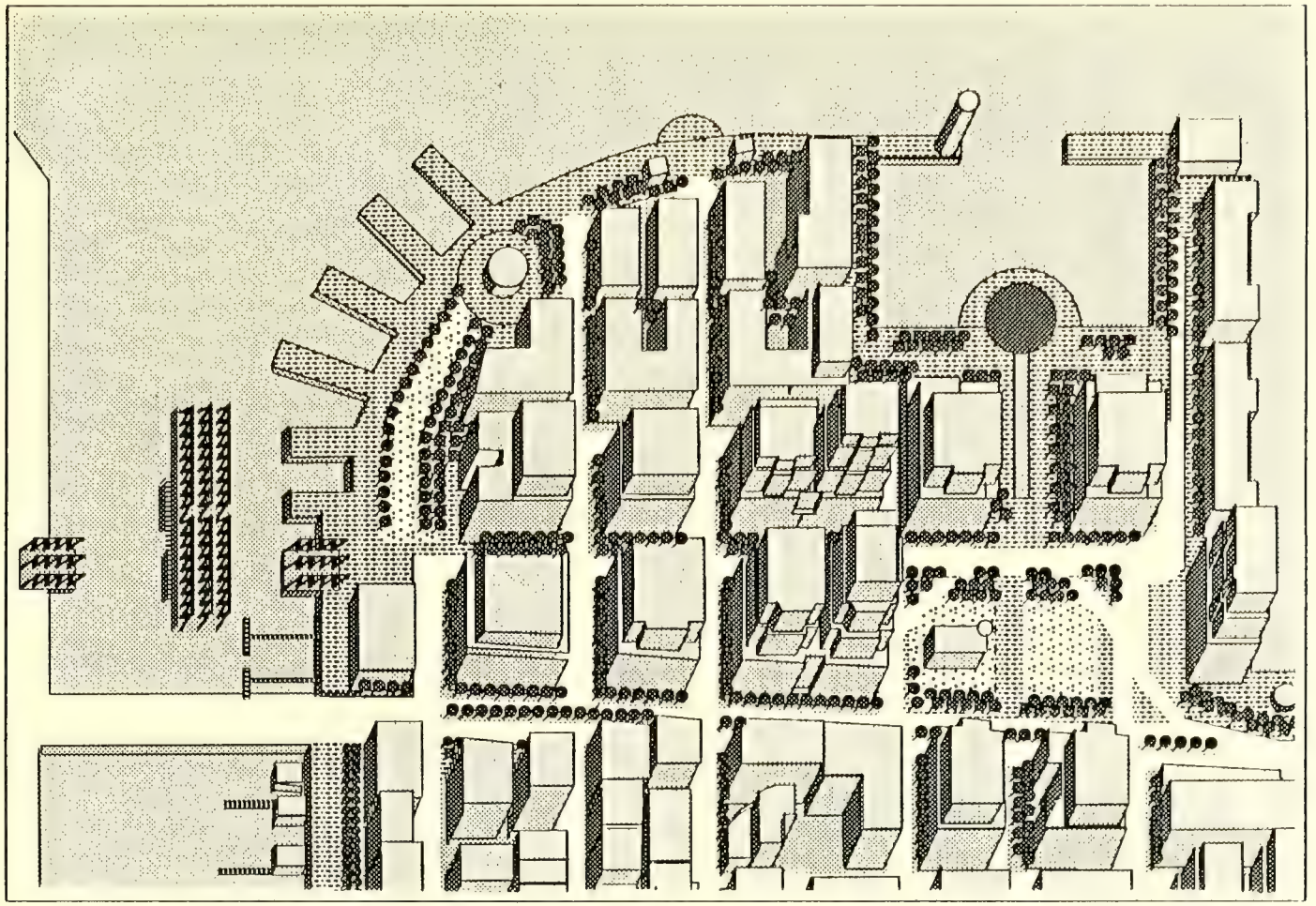


Performance area provides a focus for public spaces and activities in Waterplaza

• Principal Open Spaces

Pier 4 Waterplaza: this active public space will bring together retail, commercial, hotel, and residential uses around an extensive new marina. A public performance area will provide a central focus for the plaza, which will also be enlivened by outdoor cafes and public artwork. Tree-shaded sitting areas will offer views of the maritime activities. An open pedestrian walkway, lined with shops, will connect the space to Mariners' Park and the "Walk to the Water" pedestrian connection south to the Summer Street Steps.

Illustrative view of building massings along Fan Pier/Pier 4 waterfront, extending north south-view corridors, and preserving sun, light, and views on waterfront



Public Environment

• Park and Streetscape Design

To create the desired character of the public environment, streetscape designs should reflect the hierarchy of parks, streets, and public spaces.

The waterfront Harborwalk shall have an average width of 125', subdivided into two zones. An 80' wide Waterfront Zone shall have hard paving, such as granite, brick, or tiles, which reflects the maritime character of the space, and provides access for service vehicles to boat landings, waterfront cafes and shops, and similar uses. A 45' wide Land Zone bordering the residential area shall have a softer character, with extensive trees, lawns, and plantings, and a variety of spaces for active recreation and quieter sitting or strolling. The transition from the public waterfront park to semi-private open spaces within the residential developments should not present a forbidding barrier, but should be treated as visually open transition zone.

Secondary streets should align with existing streets, including Sleeper, Farnsworth, Pittsburgh, "Sharp," and "Flat," to extend pedestrian routes and view corridors from the Boston Wharf area to the waterfront. Such streets will be treated as public streets, with continuous 12-15' wide sidewalks, and single rows of trees spaced 25' apart.

• Mass Transit

The MBTA's Transitway will be below grade where it crosses Fort Point Channel and the waterfront, to avoid negative impacts on the surface environment. Current plans call for a highly visible station to be located at New Northern Avenue between Pittsburgh and Farnsworth Streets. The station shall be visible and accessible from Lobster Park and Mariners' Park.

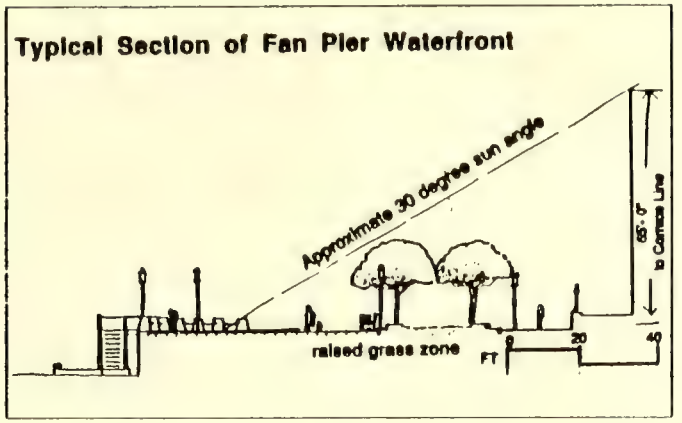
PARK & STREETSCAPE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

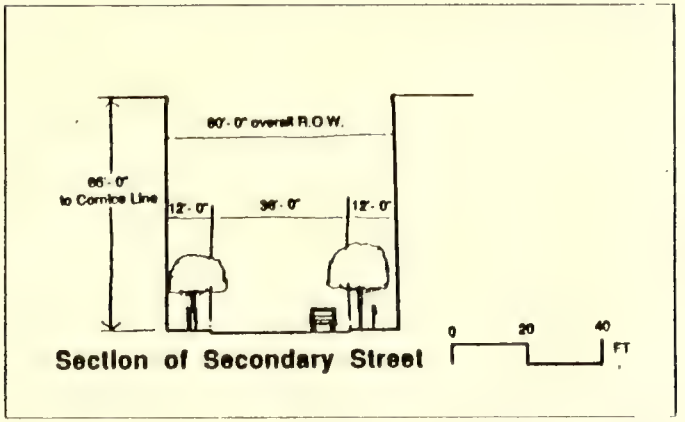
Paving and curbs: decorative paving such as brick or granite, with granite curbs.

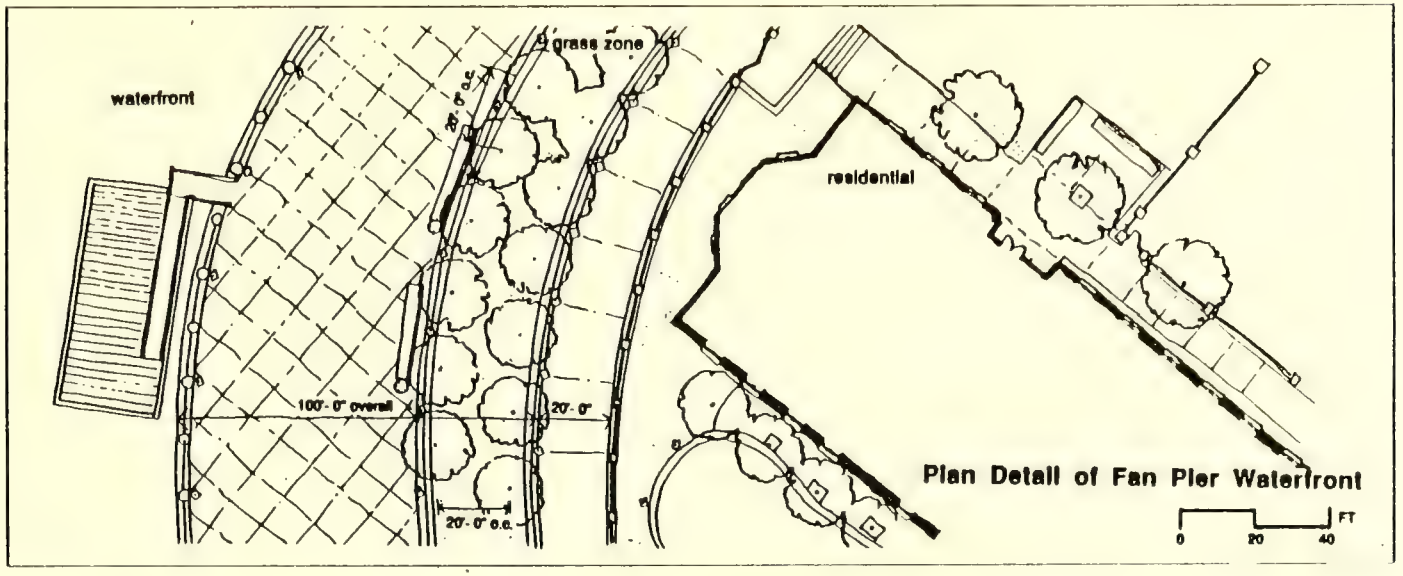
Trees: hardy deciduous trees, such as Chinese Elm, along water's edge. Mixture of native deciduous trees, including Linden, Ash, Gingko, and London Plane, on side streets.

Plantings: native seaside plants such as *rosa rugosa*.

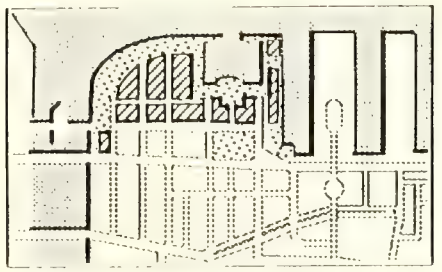
Lights: Nautical character lights on waterfront promenade, single acorns on secondary streets.


Typical Section of Fan Pier Waterfront
Approximate 30 degree sun angle
65'-0" to Cornice Line
raised grass zone
FT
20
40


80'-0" overall R.O.W.
65'-0" to Cornice Line
12'-0"
36'-0"
12'-0"
Section of Secondary Street
0
20
40
FT


grass zone
waterfront
25'-0" o.c.
residential
100'-0" overall
20'-0"
20'-0" o.c.
Plan Detail of Fan Pier Waterfront
0
20
40
FT

Private Development



Above: locator map

• Land Use and Density

High-density commercial uses shall be concentrated along the corridor of New Northern and Northern Avenues, permitting a transition to less dense residential uses adjacent to the waterfront park. Active commercial uses, including restaurants, shops, and a possible hotel, should be located adjacent to the Waterplaza. Active water-related uses, such as a ferry terminal, boat landings, and waterfront shops, should be located adjacent to Lobster Park.

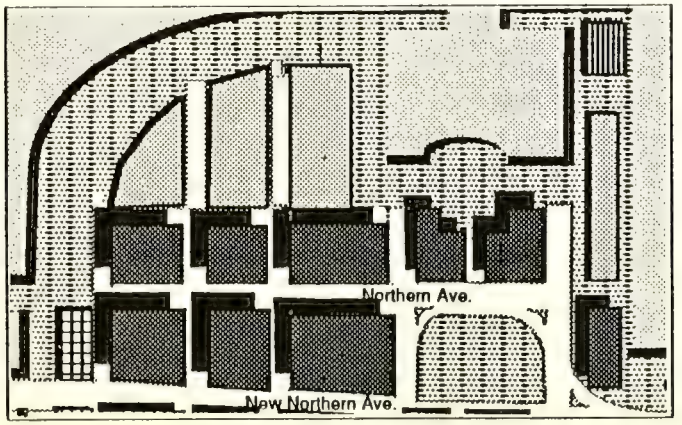
• Street-level Activities

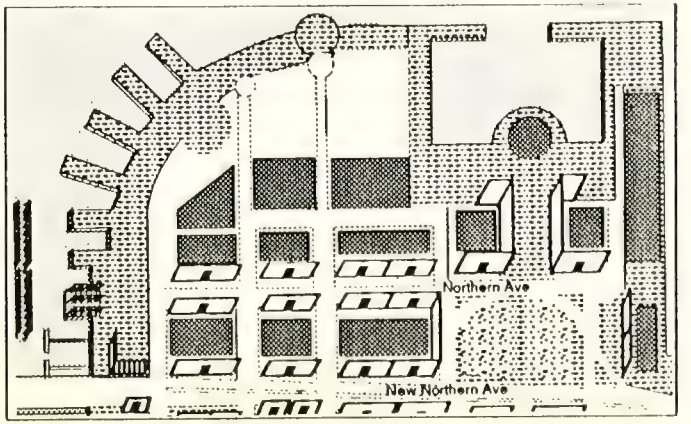
A public zone fronting on Lobster Park and Fan Pier/Pier 4 Waterplaza shall contain active retail uses and major building entries. An internal zone, serviced from the side streets, shall accomodate parking garage entrances and exits, loading docks, and other less active street-level uses. This internal zone will also be the appropriate location for courtyards and other semi-private open space, particularly in residential areas.

The location of parking garages shall also comply with the requirements of the Boston Transportation Department's South Boston Traffic Study. The facades of parking garages, where they border on public streets, shall comply with the guidelines for Architectural Character.

Left: Land uses
- housing
- commercial
- water-related
- cultural/exhibition

Right: Street-level activities
- active retail
- water-related
- building entrance
- internal zone





• Building Massing, Scale, and Height

Guidelines for the massing, scale, and height of private development will help enhance the maritime character of the public environment along the Fan Pier/Pier 4 waterfront, maintain continuity with the existing scale of the Boston Wharf area, and reinforce district-wide land use and density patterns.

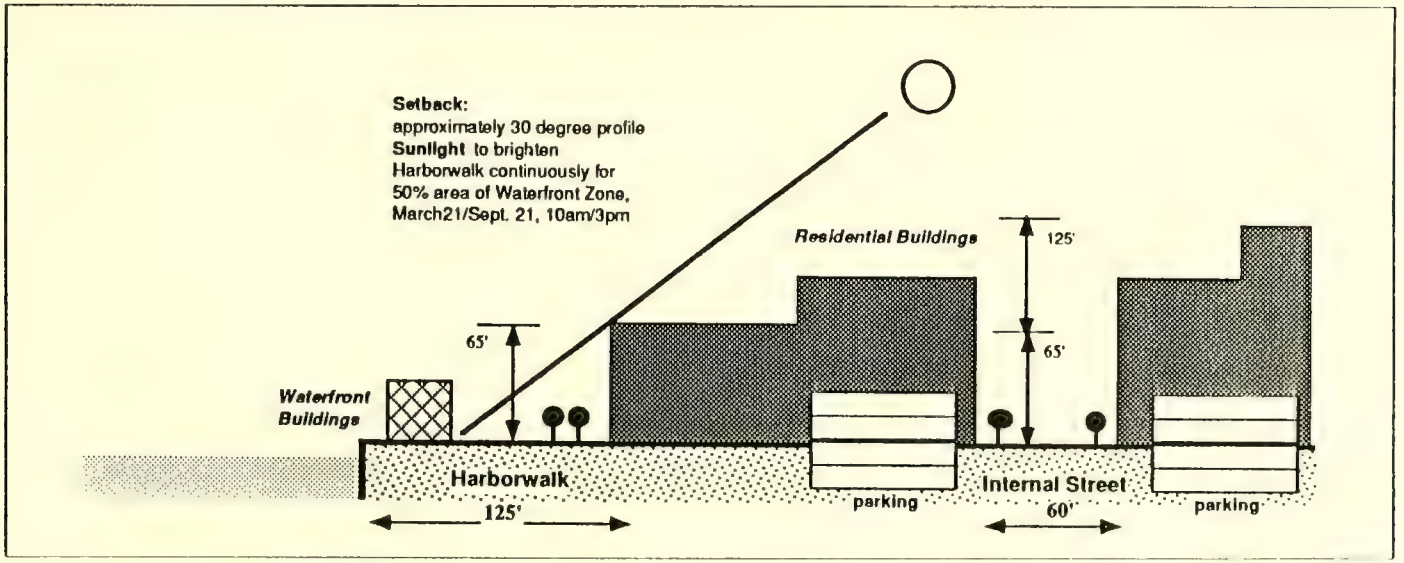
- **Waterfront scale:** buildings along the Fan Pier/ Pier 4 waterfront shall enhance the pedestrian scale of the public waterfront, with a maximum height of 65'. Building massings should maximize views of the water, define a visual landward edge to waterfront open spaces, and extend pedestrian and view corridors from Boston Wharf and New Northern Avenue to the waterfront. The Base Zone (0-30') of buildings fronting on Lobster Park and the Waterplaza shall acccomodate active and highly visible ground-level retail activities and building entrances.

  Behind the waterfront zone, buildings visible from the waterfront shall be consistent in character with buildings along New Northern and Northern Avenues, with a maximum height of 125'. Such buildings shall not present an unbroken frontage longer than 150', to be consistent in scale with the existing character of the Boston Wharf area.

- **Sun and light:** buildings shall set back to permit sun to strike the Waterfront Zone of the Harborwalk for at least 50% of its area continuously during the times of greatest pedestrian use -- between 10 AM and 3 PM (EST,) from spring to fall (March 21 to September 21).

  On internal streets, buildings shall set back a minimum of 5' at 100' height. With each additional 25' of height, another 5' setback is required. For a more detailed description of setback and massing requirements for Upper Zones, see section IV.4, New Northern Avenue.

Setback requirements for Fan Pier/Pier 4 Waterfront



• Architectural Character

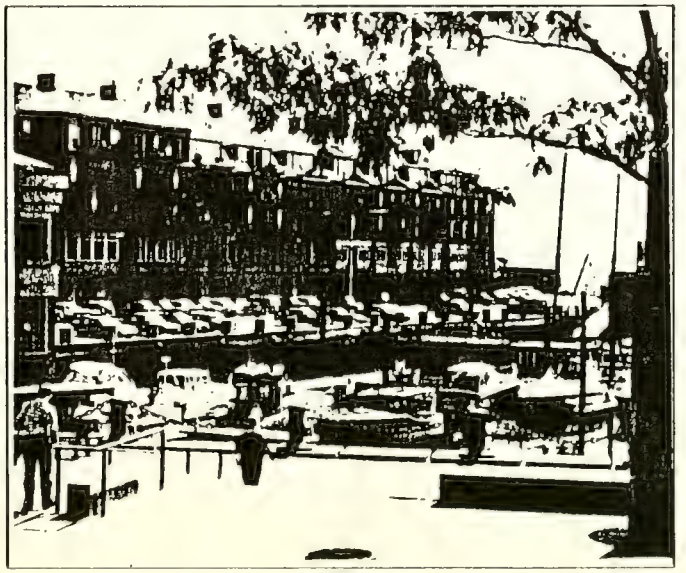
Architectural designs for new development along the Fan Pier/Pier 4 waterfront should reinforce its scale and character as a public waterfront. A greater freedom of massing and articulation shall be permitted here than elsewhere in the district, in keeping with the variety of forms and materials characteristic of the South Boston waterfront. The guidelines are not intended to prescribe a specific "style" for the Fan Pier/Pier 4 waterfront, or to inhibit creativity on the part of individual architects.

- **Waterfront Pavilions:** the articulation of commercial waterfront buildings fronting on public open spaces as free-standing pavilions is encouraged, as appropriate in scale and character to the pedestrian uses along the continuous Harborwalk. In general, a clear expression of the structural frame is encouraged. A wide variety of materials, including masonry, steel, concrete, and wood, are permitted. Reflective glass or all-glass curtain walls are not permitted.

In the **Base Zone (0-30')**, large storefront windows and door openings are encouraged, to accomodate active street-level uses. In the **Upper Zone (30-65')**, buildings may display more individuality of form and articulation, including the use of balconies, terraces, and bays offering water views. Their massing should help define a visual landward edge to waterfront spaces.

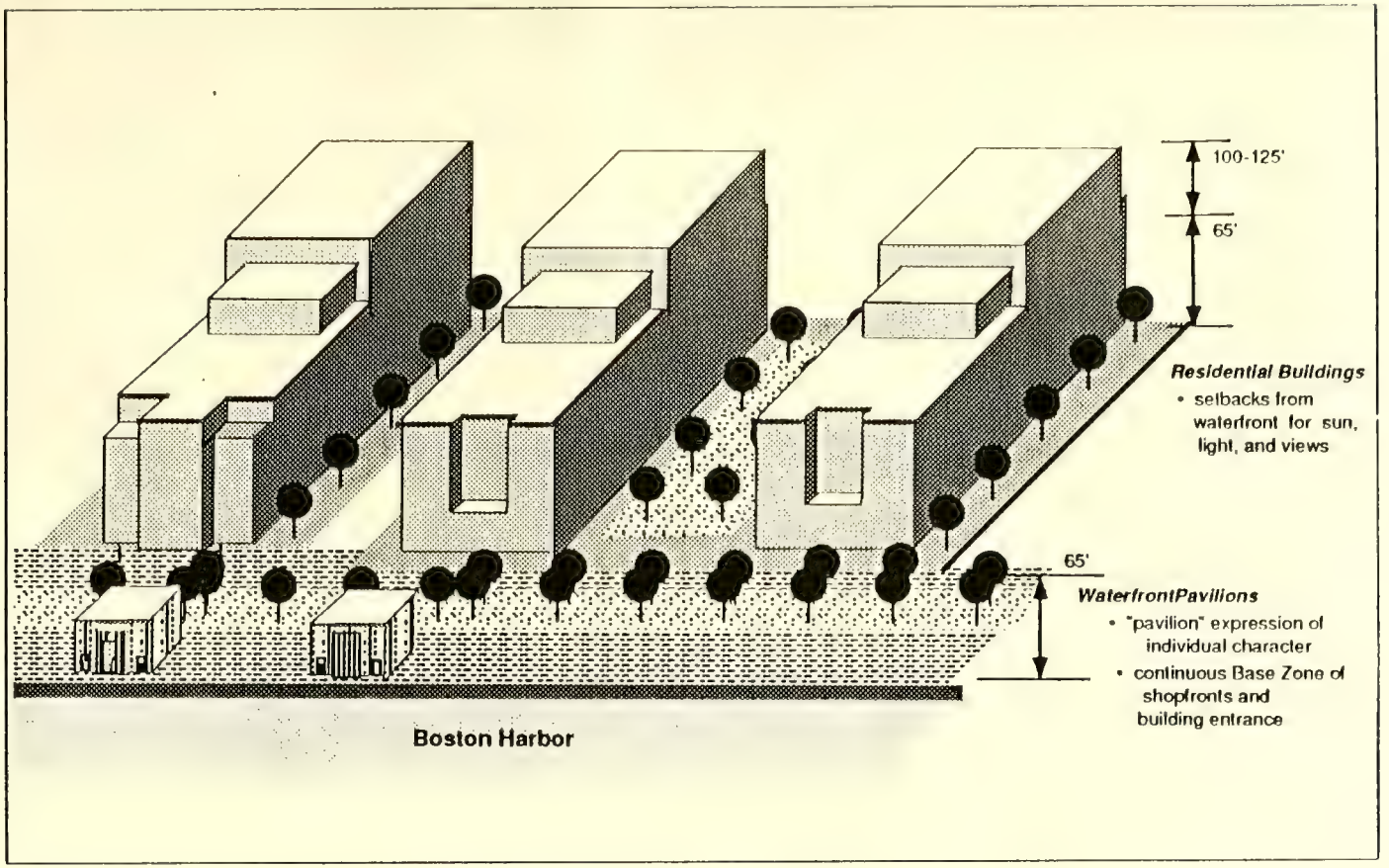
- **Residential Buildings:** residential buildings adjacent to the public waterfront shall be compatible in scale and articulation with the existing fabric of the Boston Wharf area and wharf buildings elsewhere along the Boston waterfront. Buildings should set back in gradual increments, both horizontally and vertically. **Street Facades** should be predominantly masonry, with vertically proportioned window openings set back from the wall plane. The structural bays should be emphasized by vertical elements.

In **Waterfront Facades**, a change in materials and larger areas of glazing are permitted, but buildings should continue to show a clear articulation of the structural frame, emphasizing the vertical proportion of bays and window openings. Reflective glass, or all-glass curtain walls, will not be permitted.

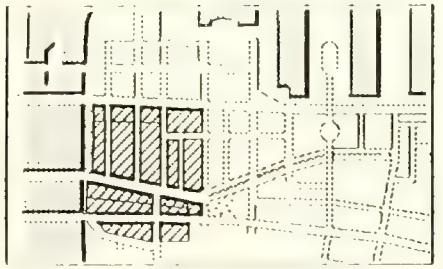


Renovated wharf building on downtown waterfront shows adaptability of form to residential use.

Guidelines for building massing, scale, and architectural character along Fan Pier/Pier 4 Waterfront



6. Boston Wharf: Historic Quarter



Above: locator map

An outstanding historic resource, the BostonWharf area contains a wealth of turn-of-the-century masonry warehouses, now often converted to other uses. Repaved streets and sidewalks, with new street trees and lighting, will enhance the existing character of the area. Strict guidelines for new development along New Northern Avenue, infill building construction, and the renovation of existing structures, will preserve the historic character of the quarter, and ensure that new development is compatible with existing structures in character and scale

The Boston Wharf area is also notable for housing one of the largest concentrations of artists on the East Coast; special measures will be taken to ensure the continued viablity of these artists' live/work spaces.

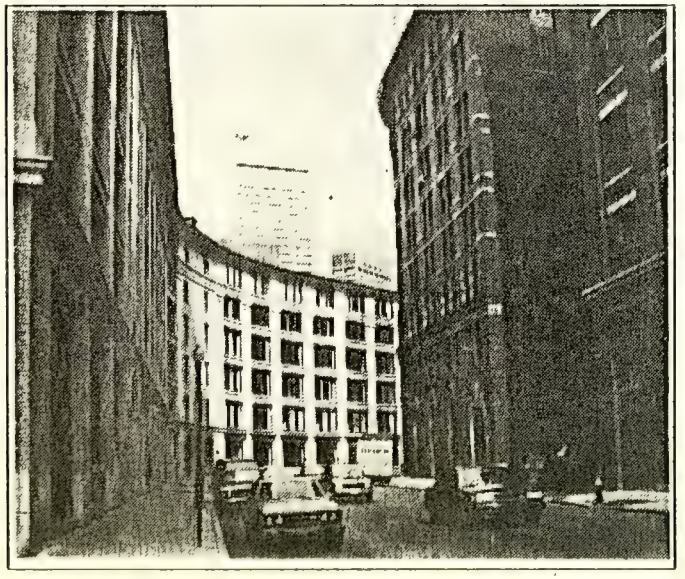
• Principal Open Spaces

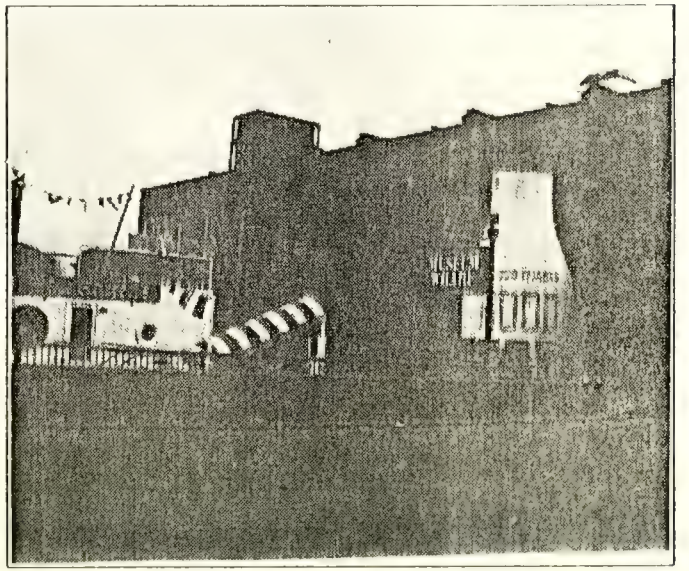
Museum Wharf: a well-known public destination, Museume Wharf is justly popular for the Children's Museum, the Computer Museum, and several restaurants, including the Milk Bottle, a notable local landmark. The existing waterfront character of the wharf will be enhanced by its extension northward to the New Northern Avenue Bridge and Lobster Park.

Summer Street Steps: located at the junction of Summer and New Congress Streets, this active public space also launches the "Walk to the Sea," a pedestrian route and view corridor north along "Harmonic" Street to Pier 4 and the waterfront. A dramatic series of terraces and steps will accommodate the 25' grade change. (See *IV.1, New Congress Street,* for full description.)

Left: view of historic structures within Boston Wharf area today.

Right: Museum Wharf is already a well-known public destination for the entire city and region





View of existing Congress Street in Boston Wharf quarter with new streetscape improvements (Lozano White and Associates)

Public Environment

• Streetscape Design

To create the desired character of the public environment, streetscape designs should reflect the hierarchy of streets and public spaces.

Congress and Summer Streets will be treated as urban boulevards, with continuous 10-12' wide sidewalks. Special paving may be used at building entrances, sidewalk cafes, and other appropriate locations. Single rows of trees, spaced 25' apart, will provide shade for pedestrians, while leaving a clear zone for shoppers along the building face.

Pittsburgh Street will be treated as a major north-south pedestrian connection, with a 10' wide sidewalk and a single row of trees spaced 25' apart on the west side, and a 6' wide sidewalk on the east side. Secondary streets, including Sleeper, Farnsworth, and Stilling, will be treated as public streets, with continuous 6-8' wide sidewalks. Internal service alleys will receive new granite paving and new lighting, where necessary attached to buildings.

• Mass Transit

The MBTA's Transitway will not cross Boston Wharf area, to avoid negative impacts on historic structures. Current plans call for highly visible stations to be located on New Northern Avenue and New Congress Street. Both stations shall be visible and accessible from the Boston Wharf area.

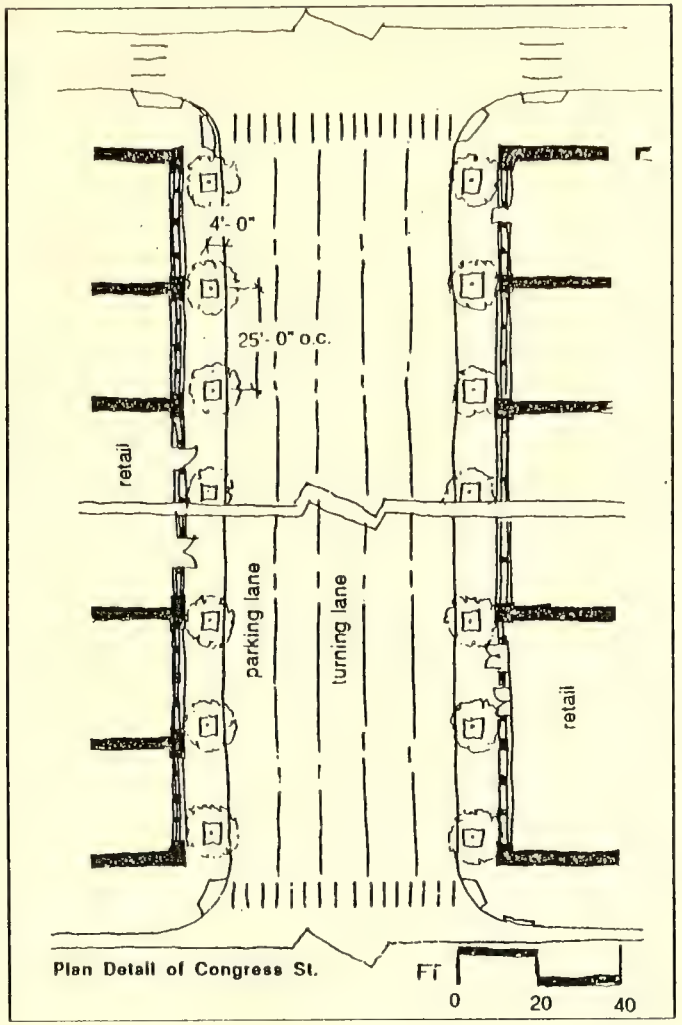
STREETSCAPE DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

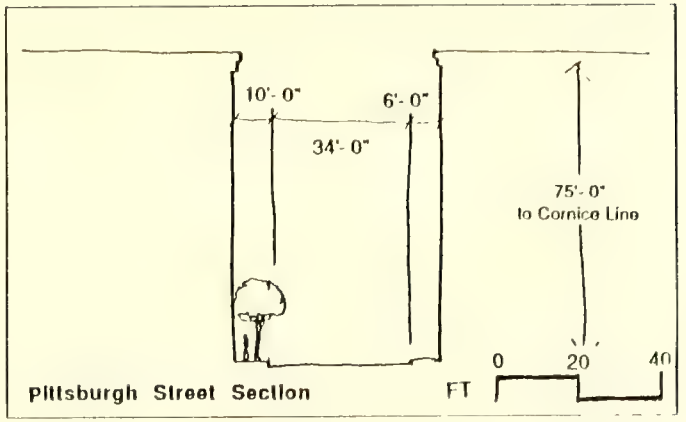
Paving and curbs: combination of concrete with decorative paving such as brick or granite, with granite curbs.

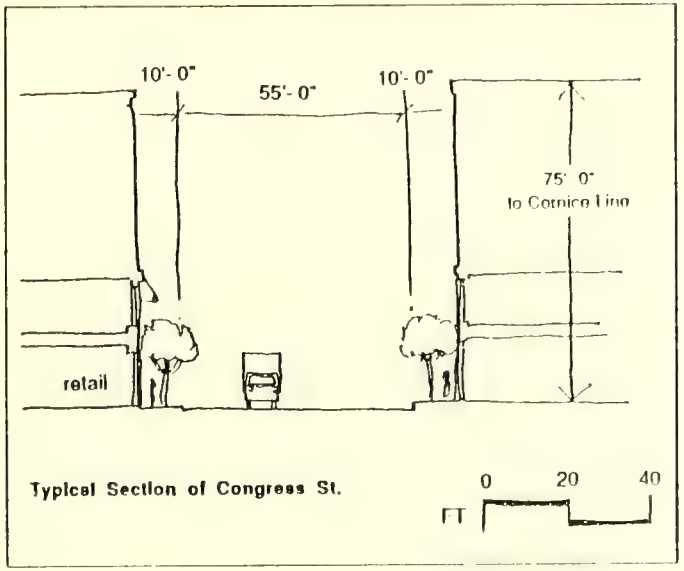
Trees: a mixture of native deciduous trees, including London Plane and Linden.

Lights: double acorns on boulevards, with single acorns on secondary streets, and quad acorns at principal public spaces.

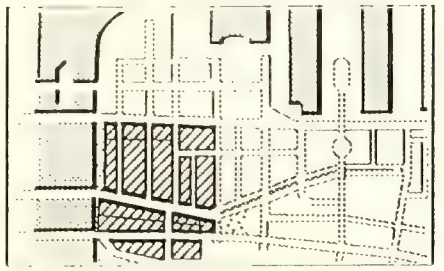
Conceptual design studies for existing Congress Street and side streets within Boston Wharf area







Private Development



Above: locator map

• Land Use

The existing mix of commercial, residential, R&D, industrial, and cultural uses within the Boston Wharf area will be maintained. Special measures will be taken to preserve the viability of artists' live/work spaces.

• Street-level Activities

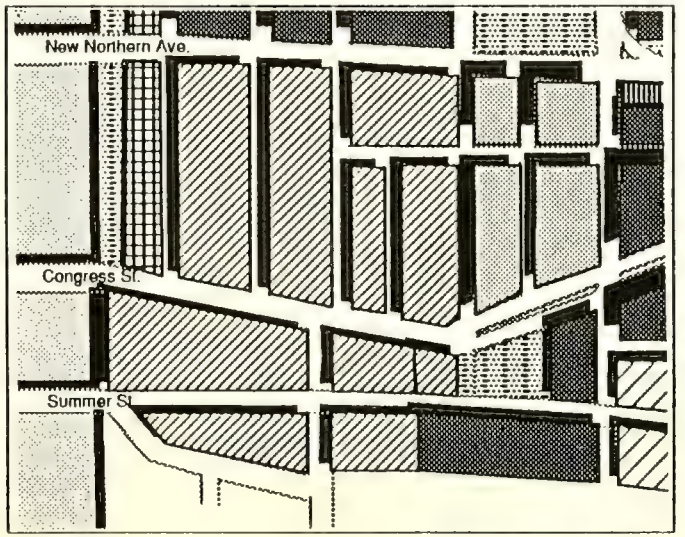
A public zone along Congress and Summer Streets shall contain major building entries, and spaces adaptable to active retail uses. An internal zone, serviced from the side streets, shall accomodate parking garage entrances and exits, loading docks, and other less active street-level uses.

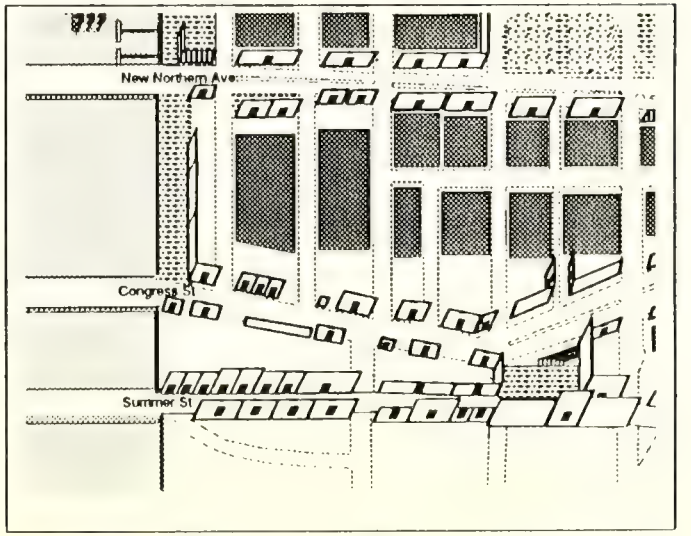
• Artists' Live/Work Spaces

There are currently 200 artists living in Boston Wharf and adjacent areas, 50% of whom own their spaces. The existing warehouse buildings provide large, open spaces; plenty of light; high ceilings; floors which can bear industrial weight equipment; freight elevators; and affordable rents. The current planning process provides an opportunity to ensure that the unique contributions the artists make to Boston Wharf and the Enterprize Zone is not lost, by making artists' live/work spaces an allowed use in the District.

Left: Land uses
- housing
- commercial
- cultural/exhibition
- Boston Wharf: industrial, commercial, residential

Right: Street-level activities
- active retail
- water-related
- building entrance
- internal zone





• Building Massing, Scale, and Height

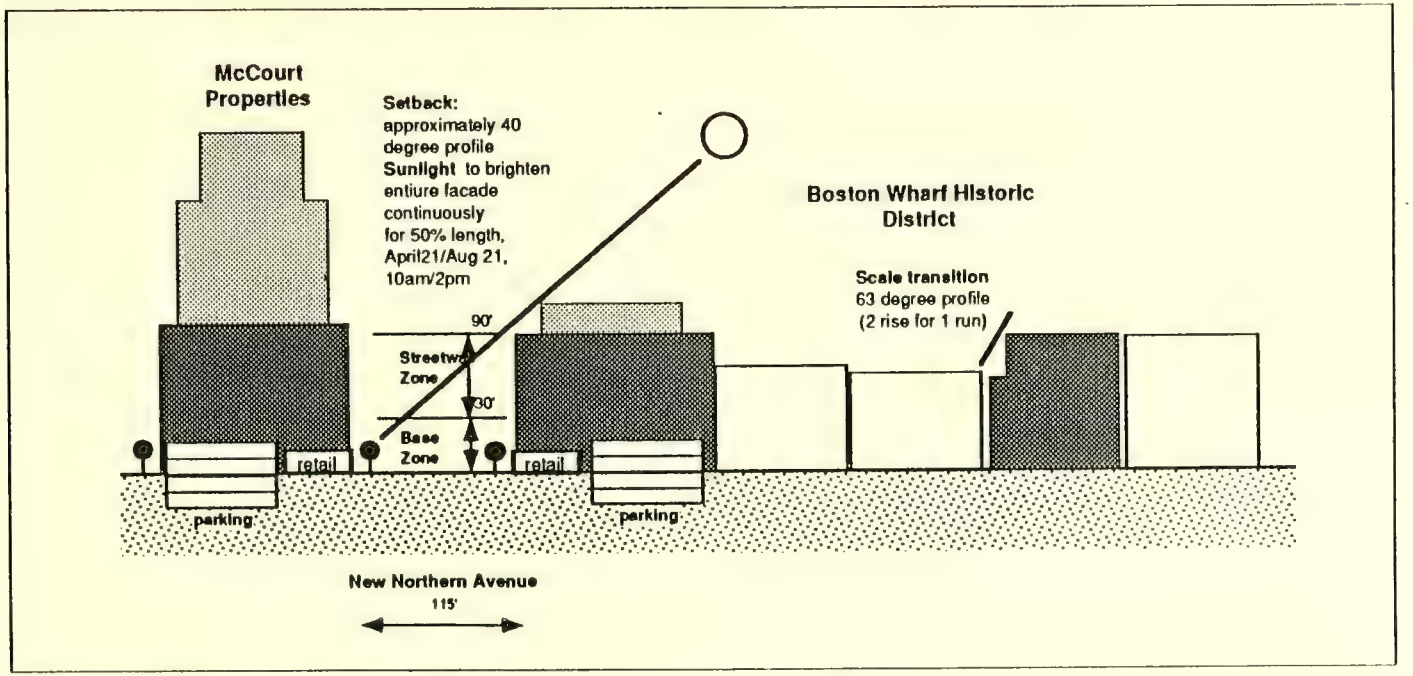
Guidelines for the massing, scale, and height of new private development will help preserve the historic character of the Boston Wharf area, and reinforce district-wide land use and density patterns.

- **Streetwalls:** in the Base Zone (0-30') and the Streetwall Zone (30'-90'), new buildings shall hold the street line. New development on New Northern Avenue and Congress and Summer Streets shall not present an unbroken streetwall frontage longer than 150', to be consistent in scale with the existing character of the area.

- **Sun and light:** above 100', penthouses are permitted to a height of 125' (155' with design review), set back from the street to ensure sun and light on public streetscapes, and to avoid visually overpowering adjacent historic structures. Such penthouses shall set back a minimum of 5' at 100' height. With each additional 25' of height, another 5' setback is required.

- **Scale transition:** where new infill construction on secondary streets adjoins an existing historic structure less than 90' high, such infill shall set back 5' for each 10' height difference between the infill and the historic structure.

Setback requirements for new construction within Boston Wharf area



• Architectural Character

Architectural designs for new development or the renovation of existing structures within the Boston Wharf area shall be compatible in scale and articulation with the existing historic fabric of the Boston Wharf area. The guidelines are intended to preserve the area's status as a historic district, holding the finest collection of intact warehouse structures within the entire city. In general, all new or renovated construction within the area which is visible from a public street, way, or open space, shall be subject to the requirements of the Boston Landmarks Commission for structures within a historic district.

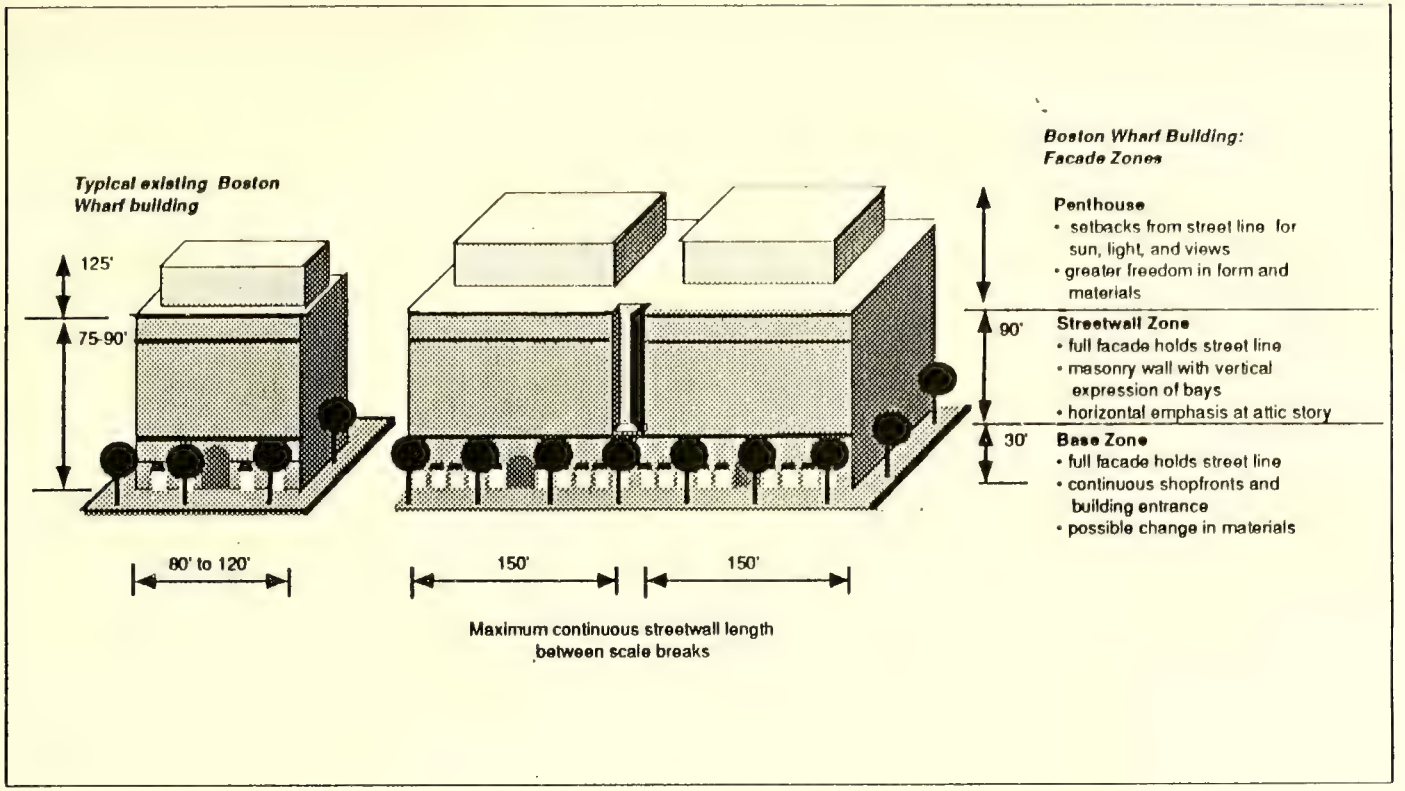
Streetwall Zone (30-90'): facades should be predominantly masonry, with vertically proportioned window openings set back from the wall plane. The structural bays should be emphasized by vertical elements. There should be a horizontal emphasis at the transition from the Base to Streetwall Zones, and at the top (attic) story, consistent with the existing cornice lines of existing buildings along Congress and Summer Streets. A distinction between the main boulevard facade and secondary side street facades is permitted through changes in materials and articulation.

Base Zone (0-30'): a change in materials, such as stone or metal, is permitted. Large storefront windows and door openings are encouraged, to accomodate active street-level uses.

Penthouses: where permitted as-of-right or under design review, penthouses should set back in gradual increments, both horizontally and vertically. A change in materials and larger areas of glazing are permitted, but penthouses should continue to show a clear articulation of the structural frame, emphasizing the vertical proportion of bays and window openings. Reflective glass, or all-glass curtain walls, will not be permitted.

A new entrance canopy shows the adaptation of a historic structure to new uses and technologies.

Guidelines for building massing, scale, and architectural character within Boston Wharf area


Typical existing Boston Wharf building
125'
75-90'
80' to 120'
150'
150'
Maximum continuous streetwall length between scale breaks
Boston Wharf Building: Facade Zones
Penthouse
• setbacks from street line for sun, light, and views
• greater freedom in form and materials
90'
Streetwall Zone
• full facade holds street line
• masonry wall with vertical expression of bays
• horizontal emphasis at attic story
30'
Base Zone
• full facade holds street line
• continuous shopfronts and building entrance
• possible change in materials

Credits

These guidelines were prepared by David Dixon & Associates for the Boston Redevelopment Authority, with additional funding from the Boston Transportation Department.

Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)
Stephen Coyle, Director
Felix De Amesti
Thomas Ennen
Richard Garver
Shirley Muirhead
Eric Schmidt

Fort Point Citizens Advisory Committee(CAC)
Larry Dwyer, Chair

Boston Transportion Department (BTD)
Richard Dimino, Commissioner
Chi-Hsin Shao
Andy McClurg
Susan Bregman

David Dixon & Associates
urban design consultant to BRA
David Dixon, Principal
Jay Wickersham, Project Manager
Rives Taylor, Urban Design
David Spillane

Steve Wolf
graphic design consultation

We would like to thank the following individuals and firms for their valuable contributions:

Martin Sokoloff
urban design consultant to Massport

Fay Spofford & Thorndike
traffic consultants to BTD
Gary Hebert

Todd Lee/Clark/Rozas
open space, illustrative sketches
Todd Lee

Bruce Campbell Associates
traffic consultants to BTD
Bruce Campbell
Carl Zellner

Lozano White Associates
urban design consultants to BTD
Eduardo Lozano

The work of many other organizations and individuals also contributed to these guidelines, including:

Boston Economic Development and Industrial Corporation (EDIC)
Boston Environment Department
Massachusetts Department of Public Works (MDPW)
Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport)
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
Bechtel/Parson Brinckerhoff
URS Associates
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
Boston Society of Architects
The Boston Harbor Association
Harborpark Advisory Committee
Fort Point Arts Community
Boston Shipping Association
South Boston Residents' Group
South Boston Citizens' Association
Fort Point Business Property Owners and Tenants Association

097 44

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 06315 552 5